

JULIA DE ROUBIGNÉ,

A T A L E.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

VOL. II.

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JULIA DE ROUBIGNE,

A T A L E.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

PUBLISHED BY

The AUTHOR OF THE MAN OF FEELING,
and THE MAN OF THE WORLD.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

L O N D O N:

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ADVERTISEMENT.

MY readers will easily perceive something particular, in the place where the following letters of *Savillon* are found, as they are manifestly of a date considerably prior to many of the preceding. They came to my hands, assort'd in the manner I have now published them, probably from a view in my young friend, who had the charge of their arrangement, of keeping the correspondence of Julia,

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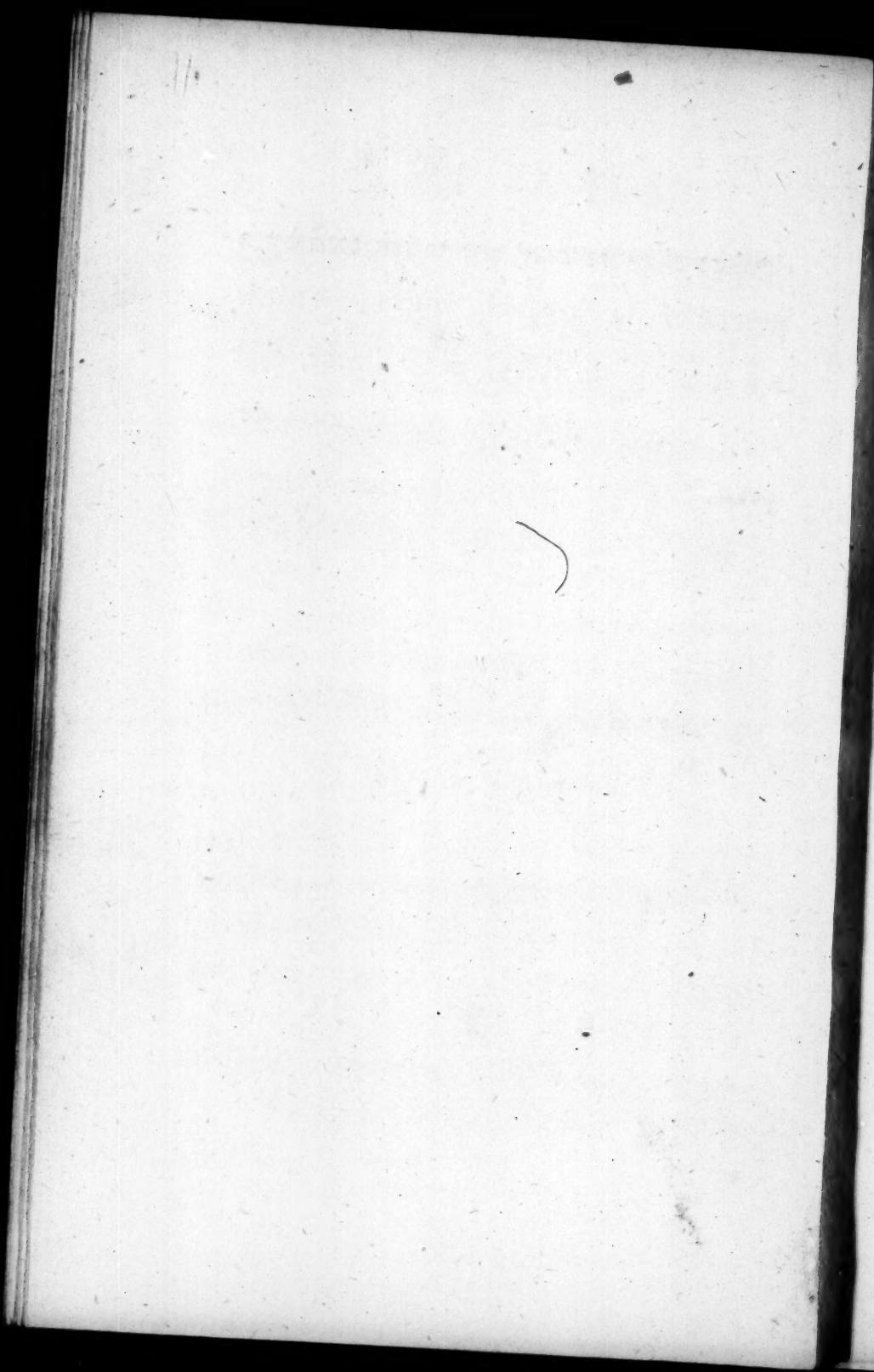
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which

which communicated the great train of her feelings on the subjects contained in them, as much undivided as possible. While I conjectured this reason for their present order, I was aware of some advantage, which these papers, as relating a story, might derive from an alteration in that particular; but, after balancing those different considerations, without coming to any decision, my indolence, perhaps (a stronger motive with most men than they are disposed to allow), at length prevailed, and I resolved to give them to the Public in the order they were transmitted to me from France. Many of the particulars

ticulars they recount are anticipated by a perusal of the foregoing letters ; but it is not so much on story, as sentiment, that their interest with the reader must depend.

JULIA



JULIA DE ROUBIGNÉ,

A T A L E.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

LETTER XXVI.

Savillon to Beauvaris.

AFTER a very unfavourable passage, we are at last arrived at our destined port. A ship is lying along-side of us, ready to sail for France, and every one on board, who can write, is now writing to some relation or friend, the hardships of his voyage, and the period of his

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arrival.

arrival. How few has Savillon to greet with tidings ! to Roubigné I have already written ; to Beauvaris I am now writing ; and, when I have excepted these, there is not in France a single man, to whom I am entitled to write. Yet I mean not to class them together ; to Roubigné I owe the tribute of esteem, the debt of gratitude ; for you I feel something tenderer than either. Roubigné has been the guide, the father, of my youth, and him I reverence as a parent : you have been the friend, the brother, of my soul, and with yours it mingles as with a part of itself.

You remember the circumstances of our parting. You would not bid me adieu till the ship was getting under way : I believe you judged aright, if you meant

to spare us both: the bustle of the scene, the rattling of the sails, the noise of the sailors, had a mechanical effect on the mind, and stifled those tender feelings, which we indulge in solitude and silence. When I went to bed, I had time to indulge them. I found it vain to attempt sleeping, and scarcely wished to succeed in attempting it. About midnight I arose, and went upon deck. The wind had been fair all day, and we were then, I suppose, more than thirty leagues from the shore. I looked on the arch of heaven, where the moon pursued her course unclouded; and my ear caught no sound, except the stilly noise of the sea around me. I thought of my distance from France as of some illusive dream, and could not believe, without an effort, that it was not four and twenty hours since

we parted. I recollect a thousand things which I should have said to you, and spoke them involuntarily in the ear of night.

There was, my friend, there was one thing, which I meant to have told you at parting. Had you staid a few moments longer in the room after the seaman called us, I should have spoken it then; but you shunned being alone with me, and I could not command even words enough to tell you, that I wished to speak with you in private. Hear it now, and pity your Savillon.

Julia de Roubigné!—Did you feel that name as I do!—Even traced with my own pen, what throbbing remembrances has it raised!—You are acquainted with

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my obligations to her father: you have heard me sometimes talk of her; but you know not, for I trembled to tell you, the power she has acquired over the heart of your friend.

The fate of my father, as well as mutual inclination, made Roubigné his friend; for this last is of a temper formed rather to delight in the pride of assisting unfortunate worth, than in the joy of knowing it in a better situation. After the death of my father, I became the ward of his friend's generosity: a state I should have brooked but ill, had not Julia been his daughter. From those early days, when first I knew her, I remember her friendship as making part of my existence: without her, pleasure was vapid, and sorrow, in her society, was

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changed into enjoyment. At that time of life, the mind has little reserve. We meant but friendship, and called it so without alarm. The love, to which at length I discovered my heart to be subject, had conquered without tumult, and become despotic under the semblance of freedom.

The misfortunes of her family first shewed me how I loved.—When her father told them the ruined state of his fortune, when he prepared them for leaving the now alienated seat of his ancestors, I was a spectator of the scene. When I saw the old man, with indignant pride, stifling the anguish of his heart, and pointing to the chaise that was to carry them from Belville, his wife, with one hand clasping her husband's,

band's, the other laid on her bosom, turning up to Heaven a look of resignation; his daughter, striving to check her tears, kneeling before him, and vowing her duty to his misfortunes; then did I first curse my poverty, which prevented me from throwing myself at her feet, and bidding her parents be happy with their Julia!—The luxury of the idea still rushes on my mind!—to heal the fortunes of my father's friend; to justify the ways of Heaven to his saint-like wife; to wipe the tears from the eyes of his angel daughter!—Beauvaris, our philosophy is false: power and wealth are the choicest gifts of Heaven: to possess them indeed, is nothing, but thus to use them, is rapture!

I had them not thus to use ; but what I could, I did. I attended his family to that ancient mansion, which was now the sole property of the once opulent Roubigné. With unwearyed attention I soothed his sorrows, and humbled myself before his misfortunes, as much as I had formerly resisted dependence on his prosperity.

He felt the assiduity of my friendship, and I saw him grateful for its exertion ; yet would the idea of being obliged, often rankle in his mind ; and I have seen him frequently look at me with an appearance of anger, when he thought I was conscious of obliging him.

Far different was the gentle nature of his daughter. She thanked me with unfeigned

feigned gratitude for my services to her father, and seemed solicitous to compensate with her smiles, for that want of acknowledgment she observed in him.

Had my heart been free before, it was impossible to preserve its freedom now. A spectator of all those excellencies which, though she ever possessed, her present situation alone could give full room to exert; all that sublimity of mind, which bore adversity unmoved; all that gentleness, which contrived to lighten it to her father, and smooth the rankling of his haughty soul! I applauded the election I had made, and looked on my love as a virtue.

Yet there were moments of anxiety, in which I feared the consequences of

indulging this attachment. My own situation, the situation of Julia, the pride of her father, the pride which it was proper for herself to feel: all these were present to my view, and shewed me how little I could build on hope; yet it cheated me, I know not how, and I dreamed, from day to day, of blessings, which every day's reflection told me were not to be looked for.

There was, indeed, something in the scene around us, formed to create those romantic illusions. The retreat of Roubigné is a venerable pile, the remains of ancient Gothic magnificence, and the grounds adjoining to it are in that style of melancholy grandeur, which marks the dwellings of our forefathers. One part of that small estate, which is still

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the appendage of this once-respectable mansion, is a wild and rocky dell, where tasteless wealth has never warred on nature, nor even elegance refined or embellished her beauties. The walks are only worn by the tread of the shepherds, and the banks only smoothed by the feeding of their flocks. There, too dangerous society! have I passed whole days with Julia: there, more dangerous still! have I passed whole days in thinking of her.

A circumstance, trifling in itself, added not a little to the fascination of the rest. The same good woman who nursed me, was also the nurse of Julia. She was too fond of her foster-daughter, and too well treated by her, ever to leave the fortunes of her family. To this residence

she attended them when they left Belville, and here too, as at that place, had a small house and garden allotted her. It was situated at the extreme verge of that dell I have described, and was often the end of those walks we took through it together. The good Lasune, for that is our nurse's name, considered us her children, and treated us, in those visits to her little dwelling, with that simplicity of affection, which has the most powerful effect on hearts of sensibility. Oh ! Beauvaris ! methinks I see the figure of Lasune, at this moment, pointing out to your friend, with rapture in her countenance, the beauties of her lovely daughter ! She places our seats together ; she produces her shining platters, with fruit and milk, for our repast ; she presses the smiling Julia, and will not be denied by

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Savillon!—Am I then a thousand leagues distant?

Does Julia remember Savillon?—Should I hope that she does?—My friend, I will confess my weakness; perhaps, it is worse than weakness; I have wished—I have hoped, that I am not indifferent to her. Often have I been on the point of unloading my throbbing heart, of telling her how passionately I loved, of asking her forgiveness for my presumption. I have thought, perhaps, it was vanity, that at some seasons she might have answered and blessed me; but I saw the consequences which would follow to both, and had fortitude enough to resist the impulse.—A time may come, when better fortune shall entitle me to speak; when

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the pride of Roubigné may not blush to look on Savillon as his son.

But this is the language of visionary hope ! In the mean time, I am torn from her, from France, from every connection my heart had formed ; cast, like a shipwrecked thing, on the other side of the Atlantic, amidst a desert, of all others, the most dreadful, the desert of society, with which no social tie unites me !—Where now are Roubigné's little copses, where his winding walks, his nameless rivulets ? Where the ivy'd gate of his venerable dwelling, the Gothic windows of his echoing hall ?—That morning, on which I set out for Paris, is still fresh on my memory. I could not bear the formality of parting, and stole from

from his house by day-break. As I passed that hall, the door was open; I entered to take one last look, and bid it adieu! I had sat in it with Julia the night before; the chairs we had occupied were still in their places; you know not, my friend, what I felt at the sight: there was something in the silent attitude of those very chairs, that wrung my heart beyond the power of language; and, I believe, the servant had told me that my horses waited, five or six times over, before I could listen to what he said.

A gentleman has sent to ask, if my name is Savillon: if it is, he desires his compliments, and will do himself

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16 JULIA DE ROUBIGNE.

the pleasure of waiting of me. I started to hear my name thus asked for in Martinique.

This gentleman is a sea-captain, a particular acquaintance of my uncle: he is more, Beauvaris, he is an acquaintance of Roubigné, has been often at Bellville, has sometimes seen my Julia.— We are intimate already, and he has offered to conduct me to my uncle's house; his horses, he says, are in waiting.

Adieu, my dearest friend! think of me often; write to me often; though you should seldom have an opportunity of conveying letters, yet write as if you had; make a journal of intelligence, and

and let it come when it may. Tell me every thing, though I should ask nothing. Your letters must give me back my country, and nothing is a trifle that belongs to her.

LETTER XXVII.

Savillon to Beauvaris.

IT is now a week since I reached my uncle's, during all which time I have been so much occupied in answering questions to the curiosity of others, or asking questions for the satisfaction of my own, that I have scarce had a moment left for any other employment.

I have now seized the opportunity of the rest of the family being still a-bed, to write to you an account of this uncle, of him under whose protection I am to rise into life, under whose guidance I am to thread the mazes of the world. I fear I

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am unfit for the task: I must unlearn feelings in which I have long been accustomed to delight: I must accommodate sentiment to convenience, pride to interest, and sometimes even virtue itself to fashion.

But is all this absolutely necessary?— I hate to believe it. I have been frequently told so indeed, but my authorities are drawn either from men who have never entered the scene at all, or entered it, resolved to be overcome, without the trouble of resistance. To think too meanly of mankind is dangerous to our reverence of virtue.

It is supposed, that in these wealthy islands, profit is the only medium of opinion, and that morality has nothing to do.

do in the system ; but I cannot easily imagine that, in any latitude, the bosom is shut to those pleasures which result from the exercise of goodness, or that honesty should be always so unsuccessful as to have the sneer of the million against it. Men will not be depraved beyond the persuasion of some motive, and self-interest will often be the parent of social obligation.

My uncle is better fitted for judging of this question ; he is cool enough to judge of it from experience, without being misled by feeling.—He believes there are many more honest dealings than honest men, but that there are more honest men than knaves every where ; that common sense will keep them so, even exclusive of principle ; but that all may be vanquished by adequate temptation.

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With a competent share of plain useful parts, and a certain steady application of mind, he entered into commerce at an early period of life. Not apt to be seduced by the glare of great apparent advantage, nor easily intimidated from his purposes by accidental disappointment, he has held on, with some vicissitude of fortune, but with uniform equality of temper, till, in virtue of his abilities, his diligence, and his observation, he has acquired very considerable wealth. He still, however, continues the labour of the race, though he has already reached the goal; not because he is covetous of greater riches, but because the industry, by which greater riches are acquired, is grown necessary to his enjoyment of life. "I have been long," said he yesterday, "a very happy man; having had a little less time,

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and a little more money, than I know what to make of."

The opinion of the world he trusts but little, in his judgment of others; of men's actions he speaks with caution, either in praise or blame, and is commonly most sceptical, when those around him are most convinced: for it is a maxim with him, in questions of character, to doubt of strong evidence, from the very circumstance of its strength.

With regard to himself, however, he accepts of the common opinion, as a sort of coin, which passes current, though it is not always real, and often seems to yield up the conviction of his own mind in compliance to the general voice. Ever averse to splendid project in action,

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or splendid conjecture in argument, he contents himself with walking in the beaten track of things, and does not even venture to leave it, though he may, now and then, observe it making small deviations from reason and justice. He has sometimes, since our acquaintance began, tapped me on the shoulder, in the midst of some sentiment I was uttering, and told me, with a smile, that these were fine words, and did very well in the mouth of a young man. Yet he seems not displeased with my feeling what himself does not feel; and looks on me with the more favourable eye, that I have something about me for experience and observation to prune.

His plan of domestic economy is regular, but nobody is disturbed by its re-

gularity; for he is perfectly free from that rigid attention to method, which one frequently sees in the houses of old bachelors. He has sense, or *sang-froid* enough, not to be troubled with little disarrangements, and bears, with wonderful complacency, and consequently with great ease to guests, those accidents which disturb the peace of other entertainments. Since my arrival, we have had every day something like a feast, probably from a sort of compliment which his friends meant to pay to him and to me; but at his table, in its most elevated style, the government is nearly republican; he assumes very little, either of the trouble, or the dignity of a landlord, satisfied with giving a general assurance of welcome and good-humour in his aspect.

At

At one of those dinners was a neighbour and intimate acquaintance of my uncle, a Mr. Dorville, with his wife and daughter. The young lady was seated next me, and my uncle seemed to incline that I should be particularly pleased with her. He addressed such discourse to her as might draw her forth to the greatest advantage; and, as he had heard me profess myself a lover of music, he made her sing, after dinner, till, I believe, some of the company began to be tired of their entertainment. After they were gone, he asked my opinion of Mademoiselle Dorville, in that particular style by which a man gives you to understand, that his own is a very favourable one. To say truth, the lady's appearance is in her favour; but there is a jealous sort of

feeling, which arises in my mind, when I hear the praises of any woman but one ; and, from that cause perhaps, I answered my uncle rather coldly. I saw he thought so, from the reply he made ; I offered some aukward apology ; he smiled, and said, I was a philosopher. Alas ! he knows not how little claim I have to philosophy in that way ; if, indeed, we are so often to profane that word, by affixing to it the idea of insensibility.

To-day I begin business. My uncle and I are to view his different plantations, and he is to shew me, in general, the province he means to allot me. I wish for an opportunity to be assiduous in his service : till I can do something on my part, his favours are debts upon me.

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It is only to a friend, like my Beauvaris,
that one feels a pleasure in being ob-
liged.

LETTER XXVIII.

Savillon to Beauvaris.

A Thousand thanks for your last letter. When you know how much I enjoyed the unwieldy appearance of the packet, with my friend's hand on the back of it, you will not grudge the time it cost you. It is just such as I wished: your scene-painting is delightful. No man is more susceptible of local attachments than I; and, with the Atlantic between, there is not a stone in France, which I can remember with indifference.

Yet I am happier here than I could venture to expect. Had I been left to my

my own choice, I should probably have sat down in solitude, to think of the past, and enjoy my reflections ; but I have been forced to do better. There is an active duty, which rewards every man in the performance ; and my uncle has so contrived matters, that I have had very little time unemployed. He has been liberal of instruction, and, I hope, has found me willing to be instructed. Our business, indeed, is not very intricate ; but, in the simplest occupations, there are a thousand little circumstances, which experience alone can teach us. In certain departments, however, I have tried projects of my own : some of them have failed in the end, but all gave me pleasure in the pursuit. In one I have been successful beyond expectation ; and in that one I was the most deeply interested,

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because it touched the cause of humanity.

To a man not callous from habit, the treatment of the negroes, in the plantations here, is shocking. I felt it strongly, and could not forbear expressing my sentiments to my uncle. He allowed them to be natural, but pleaded necessity, in justification of those severities, which his overseers sometimes used towards his slaves. I ventured to doubt this proposition, and begged he would suffer me to try a different mode of government in one plantation, the produce of which he had already allotted to my management. He consented, though with the belief that I should succeed very ill in the experiment.

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I began by endeavouring to ingratiate myself with such of the slaves as could best speak the language of my country; but I found this was a manner they did not understand, and that, from a white, the appearance of indulgence carried the suspicion of treachery. Most of them, to whom rigour had become habitual, took the advantage of its remitting, to neglect their work altogether; but this only served to convince me, that my plan was a good one, and that I should undoubtedly profit, if I could establish some other motive, whose impulse was more steady than those of punishment and terror.

By continuing the mildness of my conduct, I at last obtained a degree of willingness in the service of some; and I was

still induced to believe, that the most savage and sullen among them had principles of gratitude, which a good master might improve to his advantage.

One slave, in particular, had for some time attracted my notice, from that gloomy fortitude, with which he bore the hardships of his situation. Upon inquiring of the overseer, he told me, that this slave, whom he called Yambu, though, from his youth and appearance of strength, he had been accounted valuable, yet, from the untractable stubbornness of his disposition, was worth less money than almost any other in my uncle's possession. This was a language natural to the overseer. I answered him, in his own style, that I hoped to improve his price some hundreds of livres. On being

being further informed, that several of his fellow-slaves had come from the same part of the Guinea coast with him, I sent for one of them who could speak tolerable French, and questioned him about Yambu. He told me, that, in their own country, Yambu was master of them all ; that they had been taken prisoners when fighting in his cause, by another prince, who, in one battle, was more fortunate than theirs ; that he had sold them to some white men, who came, in a great ship, to their coast ; that they were afterwards brought hither, where other white men purchased them from the first, and set them to work where I saw them ; but that, when they died, and went beyond the Great Mountains, Yambu should be their master again.

I dismissed the negro, and called this Yambu before me.

When he came, he seemed to regard me with an eye of perfect indifference. One who had inquired no further, would have concluded him possessed of that stupid insensibility, which Europeans often mention as an apology for their cruelties. I took his hand; he considered this a prologue to chastisement, and turned his back to receive the lashes he supposed me ready to inflict. "I wish to be the friend of Yambu," said I. He made me no answer: I let go his hand, and he suffered it to drop to its former posture. "Can this man have been a prince in Africa?" said I to myself.—I reflected for a moment.—"Yet what should he now do, if he has?—Just what I see him do.

do. I have seen a deposed sovereign at Paris ; but in Europe, kings are artificial beings, like their subjects.—Silence is the only throne which adversity has left to princes.”

“ I fear, (said I to him) you have been sometimes treated harshly by the overseer ; but you shall be treated so no more : I wish all my people to be happy.” He looked on me now for the first time.—“ Can you speak my language, or shall I call for some of your friends who can explain what you would say to me ?”—“ I speak no say to you,” he replied in his broken French.—“ And you will not be my friend ?”—“ No.”—“ Even if I should deserve it.”—“ You a white man.”—I felt the rebuke as I ought.—“ But all white men are not overseers. What

shall I do to make you think me a good man?"—"Use men goodly."—"I mean to do so, and you among the first, Yambu."—"Be good for Yambu's people; do your please with Yambu."

Just then the bell rung as a summons for the negroes to go to work: he made a few steps towards the door. "Would you now go to work (said I), if you were at liberty to avoid it?"—"You make go for whip, and no man love go."—"I will go along with you, though I am not obliged; for I chuse to work sometimes, rather than be idle."—"Chuse work, no work at all," said Yambu.—'Twas the very principle on which my system was founded.

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I took him with me into the house when our task was over. "I wrought chuse-work (said I), Yambu, yet I did less than you?"—"Yambu do chuse-work then too?"—"You shall do so always, answered I: from this moment you are mine no more!"—"You sell me other white men then?"—"No, you are free, and may do whatever you please!"—"Yambu's please no here, no this country?" he replied, waving his hand, and looking wistfully towards the sea.—"I cannot give you back your country, Yambu; but I can make this one better for you. You can make it better for me too, and for your people!"—"Speak Yambu that (said he eagerly), and be good man!"—"You would not (said I) make your people work by the whip, as you see the overseers do?"—"Oh! no,

no

no whip!"—" Yet they must work, else we shall have no sugars to buy them meat and clothing with."—(He put his hand to his brow, as if I had started a difficulty he was unable to overcome.)—“ Then you shall have the command of them, and they shall work chuse-work for Yambu.”—He looked askance, as if he doubted the truth of what I said; I called the negro with whom I had the first conversation about him, and, pointing to Yambu, “ Your master (said I) is now free, and may leave you when he pleases!”—“ Yambu no leave you,” said he to the negro warmly.—“ But he may accompany Yambu if he chuses.”—Yambu shook his head.—“ Master, (said his former subject), where we go? leave good white man, and go to bad; for much bad white men in this country.”

—“ Then

—“ Then if you think it better, you shall both stay; Yambu shall be my friend, and help me to raise sugars for the good of us all: you shall have no overseer but Yambu, and shall work no more than he bids you ?”—The negro fell at my feet, and kissed them: Yambu stood silent, and I saw a tear on his cheek.—“ This man has been a prince in Africa !” said I to myself.

I did not mean to deceive them. Next morning I called those negroes who had formerly been in his service together, and told them that, while they continued in the plantation, Yambu was to superintend their work; that, if they chose to leave him and me, they were at liberty to go; and that, if found idle or unworthy, they should not be allowed to stay.

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He has, accordingly, ever since had the command of his former subjects, and superintended their work in a particular quarter of the plantation; and, having been declared free, according to the mode prescribed by the laws of the island, has a certain portion of ground allotted him, the produce of which is his property. I have had the satisfaction of observing those men, under the feeling of good treatment, and the idea of liberty, do more than almost double their number subject to the whip of an overseer. I am under no apprehension of desertion or mutiny; they work with the willingness of freedom, yet are mine with more than the obligation of slavery.

I have been often tempted to doubt whether there is not an error in the whole

plan

plan of negro servitude, and whether whites, or creoles born in the West-Indies, or perhaps cattle, after the manner of European husbandry, would not do the business better and cheaper than the slaves do. The money which the latter cost at first, the sickness (often owing to despondency of mind) to which they are liable after their arrival, and the proportion that die in consequence of it, make the machine, if it may be so called, of a plantation extremely expensive in its operations. In the list of slaves belonging to a wealthy planter, it would astonish you to see the number unfit for service, pining under disease, a burden on their master.—I am talking only as a merchant:—but as a man—good Heavens! when I think of the many thousands of my fellow-creatures groaning under

under servitude and misery! — Great God! hast thou peopled those regions of thy world for the purpose of casting out their inhabitants to chains and torture? — No; thou gavest them a land teeming with good things, and lighted'st up thy sun to bring forth spontaneous plenty; but the refinements of man, ever at war with thy works, have changed this scene of profusion and luxuriance, into a theatre of rapine, of slavery, and of murder!

Forgive the warmth of this apostrophe: here it would not be understood; even my uncle, whose heart is far from a hard one, would smile at my romance, and tell me that things must be so. Habit, the tyrant of nature and of reason, is deaf to the voice of either; here she stifles humanity, and debases the species — for

—for the master of slaves has seldom the soul of a man.

This is not difficult to be accounted for; from his infancy he is made callous to those feelings, which soften at once and ennable our nature. Children must of necessity first exert those towards domestics, because the society of domestics is the first they enjoy; here they are taught to command for the sake of commanding, to beat and torture for pure amusement;—their reason and good-nature improve as may be expected.

Among the legends of a European nursery, are stories of captives delivered, of slaves released, who had pined for years in the durance of unmerciful enemies.

mies. Could we suppose its infant audience transported to the sea-shore, where a ship laden with slaves is just landing ; the question would be universal, “ Who shall set these poor people free ? ” — The young West-Indian asks his father to buy a boy for him, that he may have something to vent his spite on when he is peevish.

Methinks too, these people lose a sort of connexion which is of more importance in life than most of the relationships we enjoy. The ancient, the tried domestic of a family, is one of its most useful members, one of its most assured supports. My friend, the ill-fated Roubigné, has not one relation who has stood by him in the shipwreck of his fortunes ; but the storm could not sever from their master

master his faithful Le Blanc, or the venerable Lasune.

Oh Beauvaris ! I sometimes sit down alone, and transporting myself into the little circle at Roubigné's, grow sick of the world, and hate the part which I am obliged to perform in it.

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LETTER XXIX.*

Savillon to Beauvaris.

SINCE the date of my last is a longer period than you allow between my letters ; but my time has been more than commonly occupied of late. Among other employments was that of acquiring a friend. Be not, however, jealous : my heart cannot own a second in the same

* It is proper to apologize to the reader for introducing a letter so purely episodical. I might tell him, that it is not altogether unnecessary, as it introduces to his acquaintance a person, whose correspondent Savillon becomes at a future period ; but I must once more resort to an egotism for the true reason : the picture it exhibited pleased myself, and I could not resist the desire of communicating it.

degree

degree with Beauvaris; yet is this one above the level of ordinary men. He enjoys also that privilege which misfortune bestows on the virtuous.

Among those, with whom my uncle's extensive dealings have connected him, he had mentioned, with particular commendation, one Herbert, an Englishman, a merchant in one of the British West-India islands. Chance brought him lately to Martinique, and I was solicitous to shew every possible civility to one, who, to the claim of a stranger, added the character of a worthy and amiable man. Prepossessed as I was in his favour, my expectations fell short of the reality. I discovered in him a delicacy and fineness of sentiment, which something beyond the education of a trader must have inspired;

spired ; and I looked on him perhaps with the greater reverence, from the circumstance of having found him in a station where I did not expect he would be found. On a closer investigation, I perceived a tincture of melancholy enthusiasm in his mind, which, I was persuaded, was not altogether owing to the national character, but must have arisen from some particular cause. This increased my regard for him ; and I could not help expressing it in the very style which was suited to its object, a quiet and still attention, sympathetic but not intrusive. He seemed to take notice of my behaviour, and looked as if he had found a person, who guessed him to be unhappy, and to whom he could talk of his unhappiness. I encouraged the idea with that diffidence, which, I believe, is of all manners the most

most intimate with a mind of the sort I have described ; and, soon after, he took an opportunity of telling me the story of his misfortunes.

It was simple, but not the less pathetic. Inheriting a considerable fortune from his father, he set out in trade with every advantage. Soon after he was settled in business, he married a beautiful and excellent woman, for whom, from his infancy, he had conceived the tenderest attachment ; and, about a year after their marriage, she blessed him with a son. But love and fortune did not long continue to smile upon him. Losses in trade, to which, though benevolence like his be more exposed, the most prudent and unfeeling are liable, reduced him, from his former affluence, to very embar-

raſfed circumstances ; and his diſtreſs was aggravated from the conſideration, that he did not ſuffer alone, but communicated miſfortune to a woman he paſſionately loved. Some very conſiderable debts reſtained due to him in the West-Indies, and he found it abſolutely neceſſary for their recovery, to repair thither himſelf, however terrible might be a ſeparation from his wife, now in a ſituatiou of all others the moſt ſuſceptible. They parted, and ſhe was, ſoon after, delivered of a girl, whose promiſing appearance, as well as that of her brother, was ſome conſolation for the abſence of their father.

His abſence, though cruel, was neceſſary, and he found his affairs in ſuch a ſituation, that it promiſed not to be long. Day after day, however, elapſed, without their

their final settlement. The impatience both of his wife and him was increased, by the appearance of a conclusion, which so repeatedly disappointed them ; till, at last, he ventured to suggest, and she warmly approved, the expedient of coming out to a husband, whose circumstances prevented him from meeting her at home. She set sail with her children ; but wife nor children ever reached the unfortunate Herbert ! they perished in a storm soon after their departure from England.

You can judge of the feelings of a man, who upbraided himself as their murderer. An interval of madness, he informed me, succeeded the account he received of their death. When his reason returned, it settled into a melancholy, which time has soothed, not extinguished, which

D 2 indeed

indeed seems to have become the habitual tone of his mind. Yet is it gentle, though deep, in its effects ; it disturbs not the circle of society around him, and few, except such as are formed to discover and to pity it, observe any thing peculiar in his behaviour. But he holds it not the less sacred to himself ; and often retires from the company of those, whom he has entertained with the good humour of a well-bred man, to arrange the memorials of his much-loved Emily, and call up the sad remembrance of his former joys.

Having acquired a sort of privilege with his distress, from my acquaintance with its cause, I entred his room yesterday, when he had thus shut out the world, and found him with some letters on the table before him, on which he looked,

looked, with a tear, not of anguish, but of tenderness. I stopped short on perceiving him thus employed ; he seemed unable to speak, but making a movement, as if he desired that I should come forward, put two of those letters successively into my hand. They were written by his wife : the first, soon after their marriage, when some business had called him away from her into the country ; and the second, addressed to him in the West-Indies, where, by that time, their ill-fortune had driven him. They pleased me so much, that I asked his leave to keep them for a day or two. He would not absolutely refuse me ; but said they had never been out of his possession. I pressed him no further : I could only read them over repeatedly, and some parts, that struck most forcibly on my

memory, which you know is pretty tenacious, I can recollect almost *verbatim*. To another, it might seem odd to write such things as these; but my Beauvaris is never inattentive to the language of nature, or the voice of misfortune.

In the first letter were the following expressions,

“ You know not what feelings are here, at thus, for the first time, writing to my Henry under the name of a husband.—A mixture of tenderness, of love, of esteem, and confidence. A something, never experienced before, is so warm in my heart, that sure it is, at this moment, more worthy of his love than ever.—Shall not this last, my Harry, notwithstanding what I have heard from the scoffers among you men? I think it shall.

It

It is not a tumultuous transport, that must suddenly disappear; but the soft, still pleasure of a happy mind, that can feel its happiness, and delight in its cause.

“I have had little company since you left me, and I wish not for much. The idea of my Henry is my best companion. I have figured out your journey, your company, and your business, and filled up my hours with the picture of what they are to you.”

* * * * *

“John has just taken away my chicken: you know he takes liberties.—“Dear heart, a leg and wing only.—Betty says, Madam, the cheesecakes are excellent.”—I smiled at John’s manner of pressing, and helped myself to a cheesecake. The poor fellow looked so happy—“My master will

soon return," said he, by way of accounting for my puny dinner. He set the wine upon the table: I filled out half a glass, and began to think of you; but, in carrying it to my lips, I reproached myself that it was not a bumper: that was remedied as it should be. John, I believe, guessed at the correction.—"God bless him!" I heard him say, muttering as he put up the things in his basket.—I sent him down with the rest of the bottle, and they are now drinking your health in the kitchen."

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"My cousin Harriet has come in to see me, and is going on with the cap I was making up, while I write this by her. She is a better milliner than I, and would have altered it somewhat; but I stuck to my own way, for I heard you say you liked it.

in

in that shape.—“ It is not half so fashionable, indeed, my dear,” said Harriet ; but she does not know the luxury of making up a cap to please the husband one loves.—This is all very foolish : is it not ? but I love to tell you those trifles : it is like having you here. If you can, write me just such a letter about you.”

Of the other letter, I recollect some passages, such as these.

“ Captain Lewson has just now been with me, but has brought no letter ; and gives for reason, your having written by a ship that left the island but a few days before him, meaning the Triton, by which I got your last ; but I beg to bear from you by every opportunity, especially by so friendly

D 5 a hand

a band as Lewson ; it would endear a man, to whom I have reason to be grateful, much more to me, that he brought a few lines from you. Think, my dearest Harry, that hearing from you is all that your Emily has now to expect, at least for a long, long time.

“ Perhaps, (as you sometimes told me, in former days, when, alas ! we only talked of misfortunes) we always think our present calamity the bitterest ; yet, methinks, our separation is the only evil, for which I could not have found a comfort. In truth, we were not unhappy : health and strength were left us : we could have done much for one another, and for our dear little ones. I fear, my love, you thought of me less nobly, than I hope I deserved : I was not to be shocked by any retrenchment from our former way of living : I could have born even the

the hardships of poverty, had it left me my Harry?"

* * * * *

"Your sweetmeats arrived very safe under the care of Captain Lewson: the children have profited by them, particularly Billy, who has still some remains of the hooping-cough. He asked me, if they did not come from papa; and when, said he, will papa come himself? "Papa," cried my little Emmy, who has just learned to lisp the word. "She never saw papa, (replied her brother) did she, mamma?"—I could not stand this prattle; my boy wept with me for company's sake!"

* * * * *

"Emmy, they tell me, will be a beauty. She has, to say truth, lovely dark blue eyes,

and a charming complexion. I think there is something of melancholy in her look; but this may be only my fancy. Billy is quite different, a bold spirited child; yet he is remarkably attentive to every thing I endeavour to teach him, and can read a little already, with no other tutor than myself. I chose this task, to amuse my lonely hours; for I make it a point of duty, to keep up my spirits as well as I can. Sometimes, indeed, I droop in spite of me, especially when you seem to waver about the time of your return. Think, my love, what risks your health runs for the sake of those riches, which are of no use without it; and, after all, it is chiefly in opinion, that their power of bestowing happiness consists. I am sure, the little parlour, in which I now write, is more snug and comfortable, than the large room we used to receive company in formerly; and

and the plain meal, to which I sit down with my children, has more relish than the formal dinners we were obliged to invite them to. Return then, my dearest Harry, from those fatigues and dangers, to which, by your own account, you are obliged to be exposed. Return to your Emily's love, and the smiles of those little cherubs that wait your arrival."

Such was the wife whom Herbert lost; you will not wonder at his grief; yet sometimes, when the whole scene is before me, I know not how, I almost envy him his tears.

It is something to endeavour to comfort him. 'Tis perhaps a selfish movement in our nature, to conceive an attachment

ment to such a character; one that throws itself on our pity by feeling its distresses, is ever more beloved than that which rises above them.—I know, however, without farther inquiry, that I feel myself pleased with being the friend of Herbert; would we were in France, that I might make him the friend of Beauvaris!

Your last mentions nothing of Roubigné, or his family. I know he dislikes writing, and therefore am not surprised at his silence to myself. You say, in a former letter, you find it difficult to hear of them; there is a young lady in Paris, for whom the lovely Julia has long entertained a very uncommon friendship; her name is Roncilles, daughter of the president Roncilles.—Yet, on second

cond thoughts, I would not have you visit her, on purpose to make inquiry as from me; but you may fall on some method of getting intelligence of them in this line.

Do not let slip the opportunity of this ship's return to write me fully; she is consigned to a correspondent of ours, and particular care will be taken of my letters. I think, if that had been the case with the last that arrived here, I should have found one from you on board of her. Think of me frequently, and write me as often as our situation will allow.

LETTER XXX.

Savillon to Beauvaris.

I Begin to suspect that the sensibility, of which young minds are proud, from which they look down with contempt on the unfeeling multitude of ordinary men, is less a blessing than an inconvenience. —Why cannot I be as happy as my uncle, as Dorville, as all the other good people around me? —I eat, and drink, and sing, nay I can be merry, like them; but they close the account, and set down this mirth for happiness; I retire to the family of my own thoughts, and find them in weeds of sorrow.

Herbert

Herbert left this place yesterday ! the only man besides thee, whom my soul can acknowledge as a friend. And him, perhaps, I shall see no more : And thee ! my heart droops at this moment, and I could weep without knowing why.—Tell me, as soon as possible, that you are well and happy ; there is, methinks, a languor in your last letter—or is it but the livery of my own imagination, which the objects around me are constrained to wear ?

Herbert was a sort of proxy for my Beauvaris ; he spoke from the feelings of a heart like his. To him I could unbosom mine, and be understood ; for the speaking of a common language, is but one requisite towards the dearest intercourse of society. His sorrows gave him

him a sacredness in my regard, that made every endeavour to serve or oblige him, like the performance of a religious duty; there was a quiet satisfaction in it, which calmed the rufflings of a sometimes troubled spirit, and restored me to peace with myself.

He is failed for England, whither some business, material to a friend of his much-loved Emily, obliges him to return. He yields to this, I perceive, as a duty he thinks himself bound to discharge, though the sight of his native country, spoiled as it is of those blessings which it once possessed for him, must be no easy trial of his fortitude. He talks of leaving it as soon as this affair will allow him, not to return to the West-Indies (for of his business there he is now independent),
but

but to travel through some parts of Europe, which the employments of his younger years prevented him from visiting at an early period of life. If he goes to Paris, he has promised me to call on you.—Could I be with you! What a thought is there!—but I shall not be forgotten at the interview.

I have just received yours of the third of last month. I must still complain of its shortness, though I dare not quarrel with it, as it assures me of your welfare. But get rid, I pray you, of that very bad practice, of supposing things unimportant at Martinique, because you think them so at Paris. Give me your intelligence, and allow me to be the judge of its consequence.

You

You are partial to your friend, when you write in such high terms, of his treatment of Yambu. We think but seldom of those things which habit has made common, otherwise we should correct many of them ; there needed only to give one's feelings room on this theme, and they could prompt no other conduct than mine. Your approbation, however, is not lost upon me ; the best of our resolutions are bettered, by a consciousness of the suffrage of good men in their favour ; and the reward is still higher, when that suffrage is from those we love.

My uncle has sent for me, to help him to entertain some company who are just arrived here. He knows not what a train of thinking he calls me from—I have

have a little remembrancer, Beauvaris, a picture, which has hung at my bosom for some years past, that speaks such things!—

The servant again!—Mademoiselle Dorville is below, and I must come immediately.—Well then—It will be difficult for me to be civil to her—yet the girl deserves politeness.—But that picture!—

* * * * *

with myself. The audience of it is even
enjoyed you to great and mighty pleasure.

LETTER XXXI.

Savillon to Beauvaris.

YOU say the letter, to which your
last was an answer, was written in
low spirits; I confess I am not always
in high ones; not even now, though I
am just returned from a little feast, where
there was much mirth, and excellent
wine. It was a dinner given by Dor-
ville, on occasion of his daughter's birth-
day, to which my uncle and I, among
other of his friends, had been long in-
vited. The old gentleman displayed all
his wealth, and all his wit, in entertaining
us; some of us thanked him for neither,
though

though every one's complaisance obliged them to eat of his dainties, and laugh at his jests.

It is after such a scene, that one is often in a state the most stupid of any. The assumption of a character, in itself humiliating, distresses and wastes us, while the loss of so much time, like the bad fortune of a gamester, is doubly felt, when we reflect that fools have won from us. Yet it must be so in life, and I wish to overcome the spleen of repining at it.

I was again set next Mademoiselle Derville, and had the honour of accompanying some of the songs she sung to us. A vain fellow, in my circumstances, might imagine that girl liked him. I believe there is nothing so serious in her mind,

and

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and I should be sorry there were. The theft of a woman's affections is not so atrocious, as that of her honour ; but I have often seen it more terrible than that of her life ; at least, if living wretchedness be worse than death : yet is it reckoned a very venial breach of confidence, to endeavour to become more than agreeable, where a man feels it impossible to repay what he may receive. Her father, I am apt to believe, has something of what is commonly called a plot upon me ; but as to him my conscience is easy, because, the coffers of my uncle being his quarry, it matters not much if he is disappointed.

Were it not from a point of delicacy, not to run the smallest risk of being thought particular, I could, sometimes, be

be very well entertained with the society of Mademoiselle Dorville. There is a sprightliness about her, which amuses, though it is not winning, and I never found it so easy to talk nonsense to any other woman. I fancy this is always the case, where there is no chance of the heart being interested: it is perfectly so in the present instance with me.—Oh! Beauvaris! I have laid out more soul in fitting five minutes with Julia de Roubigné in silence, than I should in a year's conversation with this little Dorville.

The conversation of women has perhaps a charm from its weakness; but this must be, like all their other weaknesses that please us, what claims an interest in our affections, without offending our reason. I know not if there is

really a sex in the soul : custom and education have established one, in our idea; but we wish to feel the inferiority of the other sex, as one that does not debase but endear it.

To their knowledge, in many things, we have set limits, because it seems to encroach on the softness of their feelings, which we suppose of that retiring kind, that shuns the keenness of argument or enquiry. Knowledge or learning has often this effect among men: it is even sometimes fatal to taste, if by taste is meant the effect which beauties have on ourselves, rather than the power of criticising on that which they ought to have on others.

There

There is a little world of sentiment made for women to move in, where they certainly excel our sex, and where our sex, perhaps, ought to be excelled by them. This is irresistibly engaging, where it is natural ; but, of all affectations, that of sentiment is the most disgusting. It is, I believe, more common in France than any where else ; and I am not sure, if it does not proceed from our women possessing the reality less. The daughter of Mons. Dorville, when she would be great, is always sentimental. I was forced to tell her to-day, that I hated sentiments, and that they spoiled the complexion. She looked in the glass, and began to ask some questions about the Italian comedy.

My uncle, who had staid some time behind me with Dorville, came in. He was very copious on the subject of Mademoiselle. I was perfectly of his opinion in every thing, and praised her in echo to what he said; but he had discernment enough to see an indifference in this, which I was sorry to find he did not like. I know not how far he meant to go, if we had been long together; but he found himself somewhat indisposed, and was obliged to go to bed.

I sat down alone, and thought of Julia de Roubigné.

My uncle is, this morning, really ill. I owe him too much, not to be distressed

at

at this. He is uneasy about his own situation, though, I believe, without reason; but men, who, like him, have enjoyed uninterrupted health, are apt to be apprehensive. I have sent for a physician without letting him know; for it was another effect of his good constitution, to hold the faculty in contempt. At present, I am sure, he will thank me, in his heart, for my precaution.

The doctor has been with him, and talks doubtfully; that, perhaps, is unavoidable in a science, from its nature, so uncertain; for this man has really too much knowledge to wish to seem wiser.

I find I must conclude this letter, as the ship, by which I am to send it, is within a quarter of an hour of sailing. Would

E 3 it

it had been a few days later ! a few days might do much in a fate like mine. — I cannot express that sort of doubt and fear, which the look of futurity, at this moment, gives me.

Do not, for Heaven's sake do not fail to write me about the situation of Roubigné and his family. I know his unwillingness to write, and decorum prevents (Is it vanity to think so ?) his daughter ; therefore I addressed my last letter to Madame de Roubigné ; but even when I shall receive her answer, it will not say enough. You know what my heart requires ; do not disappoint it *.

* There are no letters, in this collection, of a later date, from Savillon to Beauvaris. The person who at first arranged them, seems to intend to account for this, by the following note on the outside of the preceding one, written in a hand of which I see little jottings on several of the letters, " Beauvaris died 5th April, a few days after the receipt of this."

LETTER XXXII.

Julia de Montauban to Maria de Roncilles.

YOU must not expect to hear from me so often as formerly; we have, here, an even tenor of days, that admits not of much description. Comedies and romances, you know, always end with a marriage, because, after that, there is nothing to be said.

But I have reason to be angry with you for finding so little to say at Paris; though, I believe, the fault is in myself, or rather in your idea of me. You think I am not formed to relish those articles of intelligence, which are called news in

your great town ; the truth is, I have often heard them with very little relish ; but I know you have wit enough to make them pleasant if you would ; and even if you had not, do but write any thing, and I shall read it with an interest.

You flatter me by your praises of the *naiveté*, in the picture I drew of our party of pleasure. God knows, I have no talent that way ; yet the groupe was fantastic enough, and, though I felt quite otherwise than merry next morning, when I wrote to you, yet I found a sort of pleasure in describing it. There is a certain kind of trifling, in which a mind not much at ease can sometimes indulge itself. One feels an escape, as it were, from the heart, and is fain to take up with lighter company. It is like the theft of a truant

a truant boy, who goes to play for a few minutes while his master is asleep, and throws the chiding for his task upon futurity.

We have very different company at present. Madame de Sancerre has been here these three days. Her husband was an acquaintance of Mons. de Montauban in Spain, and, you will remember, we used to be of her parties in town; so she is a guest of both sides of the house, though I believe no great favourite of either. She is a wit, you know, and says abundance of good things; and will say any thing, provided it be witty. Here, indeed, we give her so little opportunity, that her genius is almost famished for want of subject. At Paris, I remember her surrounded with men of letters; they

praised her learning, and to us she seemed wonderful both as a scholar and a critic ; but here when I turn the discourse on books, she chuses to talk of nothing but the *beau monde*. Her descriptions, however, are diverting enough, and I believe she is not the worse pleased with me, that I can only hear them without being able to answer ; for I think, if there is a member of our society she dislikes, it is that relation of the count, whom I mentioned to you in my last, Mons. de Rouillé, who is come to spend some weeks here. From the account of his vivacity which I received from his kinsman, I thought Madame de Sancerre would have thought it a piece of high good fortune to have met him here ; but, I see, I mistook the thing ; and that she would relish his company better, if he were as stupid

stupid as the rest of us. I am of a different opinion, and begin to like him much ; the better, that I was prepared to be somewhat afraid of him ; but I find in him nothing to be feared ; on the contrary, he is my very safest barrier against the sometimes too powerful brilliancy of the lady.

Rouillé is constitutionally happy ; but his vivacity, though it seems to be constant, does not appear to be unfeeling. It is not the cheerfulness of an unthinking man, who is ready to laugh, on all occasions, without leave of his reason, or, what is worse, of his humanity ; some such people I have seen, whose mirth was like the pranks of a madman, and, if not of consequence enough to excite anger or fear, was entitled to our compas-

fion. Rouillé has the happy talent of hitting that point where sentiment mingles with good humour. His wit, except when forced into opposition by the petulance of others, is ever of that gentle kind from which we have nothing to dread; that sports itself in the level of ordinary understandings, and pleases, because it makes no one displeased with himself. Even the natural gravity of Montauban yields to the winning liveliness of Rouillé, and though the first seems to feel a little aukwarkness in the attempt, yet he often comes down from the loftiness of his own character, to meet the pleasantry of the other's.

Do not rally me on the favour of matrimony in the observation, if I venture to say, that Montauban seems to have resumed

resumed somewhat of his former dignity. Think not that I suspect the smallest diminution of his affection; but now, when the ease of the husband has restored him to his native character—I know not what I would say—Believe me, I mean nothing at all—I have the greatest reason to be satisfied and happy.

At present, I believe, he is now and then out of humour with this visitant of ours, Madame de Sancerre; and, it may be, thrown into somewhat of a severity in his manner, from the observation of an opposite one in her. When she utters, as she does pretty often, any joke at which she laughs heartily herself, I laugh, sometimes with good will, but oftener (out of complaisance) without; Rouillé laughs, and

is ready with his jest in return ; but Montauban looks graver than ever. Indeed, there is no resource for one who cannot laugh at a jest, but to look grave at it.

I wish my Maria could have accepted of the invitation he communicated by me some time ago. I think I should have shewn him, in my friend, a liveliness that would not have displeased him. Could you still contrive to come, while Rouillé is here, you must be charmed with one another. It would give me an opportunity of making up to you, for the many dull letters I have obliged you to read ; but you taxed yourself early with my correspondence ; it was then, perhaps, tolerable ; it has, of late, been a mere collection of egotisms, the egotisms too of a mind

a mind ill at ease—but I have given up making apologies or acknowledgments to you; they are only for common obligations: mine is a debt beyond their quittance.

LETTER XXXIII.

Montauban to Segarva.

I AM now three letters in your debt; yet the account of correspondence used formerly to be in my favour. The truth is, that of facts I have nothing to write, and of sentiments almost as little. Of the first, my situation here in the country deprives me; and of the last, that quiet sort of state I have got into is little productive. When I was unhappy as the lover of Julia, or first happy as her husband, I had theme enough, and to spare. I can tell you, that I am happy still; but it is a sort of happiness that would not figure in narration. I believe my Julia is

is every thing that a good wife should be: I hope I am a good husband. I am neither young nor old enough for a doating one.

You will smile and look back to certain letters and notes of mine, written some four or five months ago. I do not know why I should be ashamed of them. Were Segarva to marry, he would write such letters for a while, and there never was a man who could write such letters long. If there were, I am not sure if I should wish to be that man. When we cannot be quite so happy as others, our pride naturally balances the account: it shews us that we are wiser.

Rouillé, who has been here for a week or two, is of a different opinion: he holds

holds the happiest man to be ever the wisest. You know Rouillé's disposition, which was always too much in the sun for us ; but the goodness of his heart, and the purity of his honour, are above the rest of his character. With this pre- possession in his favour, I hear him laugh at me, without resentment ; and by and by he steals upon me, till I forget myself, and laugh with him. I am sometimes gay ; but I feel a sort of trouble in gaiety. It is exactly the reverse with Rouillé : he can be serious, when he means to be so ; but, if we mean nothing, he is gay, and I am serious.

My wife is neither one nor t'other : there is something about her too gentle for either ; but, I think, her pensive soft- ness deserts more readily to Rouillé's side

side than to mine, though one should imagine his manner the more distant from hers of the two. Rouillé jokes me on this: he calls her the middle stage between us; but says, it is up hill towards my side. "A solitary castle, and a still evening (said he) would make a Julia of me; but to be Montauban, I must have a fog and a prison."

Perhaps, if we consider matters impartially, these men have the advantage of us: the little cordialities of life are more frequently in use than its greater and more important duties. Somebody, I think, has compared them to small pieces of coin, which, though of less value than the large, are more current amongst men; but the parallel fails in one respect: a thousand of those *livres* do

do not constitute a *louis*; and I have known many characters possessed of all that the first could give, whose minds were incapable of the last. In this number, however, I mean not to include Rouillé.

We have another guest, who illustrates my meaning better, the widow of Sancerre, whom you introduced to my acquaintance, a long time ago, in Spain. She was then nothing; for Sancerre considered all women nothing, and took care that, during his life, she should be no exception to the rule. He died; she regained her freedom; and she uses it as one to whom it had been long denied. She is just fool enough to be a wit, and carries on a perpetual crusade against sense and seriousness. I bear with her very

very impatiently: she plagues me, I believe, the more. My wife smiles, Rouillé laughs at me; I am unable to laugh, and ashamed to be angry; so I remain silent and stupid.

Sometimes I cease to think of her, and blame myself. Why should I allow this spleen of sense to disqualify me for society?—Once or twice I almost muttered things against my present situation.—Julia loves me; I know she does: she has that tenderness and gratitude, which will secure her affection to a husband, who loves her as I do; but she must often feel the difference of disposition between us. Had such a man as Rouillé been her husband—not Rouillé neither, though she seems often delighted with his good humour, when I cannot be pleased with it.

it.—We are neither of us such a man as the writer of a romance would have made a husband for Julia.—There is, indeed, a pliability in the minds of women in this article, which frequently gains over opinion to the side of duty.—Duty is a cold word.—No matter, we will canvass it no farther. I know the purity of her bosom, and, I think, I am not unworthy of its affection.

Her father I see much seldomer than I could wish; but he is greatly altered of late. Since the time of his wife's death, I have observed him droop apace; but Julia says, that the distress of their circumstances kept up in him a sort of false spirit, which, when they were disembarrassed, left him to sink under reflection.

His faculties, I can easily perceive, are not in that vigour they were wont to be; yet his bodily strength does not much decline, and he seems more contented with himself, than he was when in full possession of his abilities. We wish him to live with us; but he has constantly refused our request, and it is a matter of delicacy to press him on that point. We go to see him sometimes: - he receives us with satisfaction, not ardour: violent emotions of every kind appear to be quenched in him. It creates, methinks, a feeling of mingled complacency and sadness, to look on the evening of a life and of a character like Roubigné's.

Shall I not see you here some time this autumn? You gave me a sort of

pro-

promise, and I need you more than ever. I want the society of some one, in whose company I can be pleased, without the tax of thinking that I am silly for being so.

L E T T E R XXXIV.

Julia to Maria.

I HAVE just now received a piece of intelligence, which I must beg my Maria instantly to satisfy me about. Le Blanc, my father's servant, was here a few hours ago, and among other news, informed Lisette, that a nephew of his, who is just come with his master from Paris, met Savillon there, whom he perfectly remembered, from having seen him in his visits to his uncle at Belville. The lad had no time for enquiry, as his master's carriage was just setting off, when he observed a chaise drive up to the door of the hotel, with a gentleman in it, whom

he knew to be Savillon, accompanied by a valet de chambre, and two black servants on horseback.

Think, Maria, what I feel at this intelligence!—Yet why should it alarm me?—Alas! you know this poor, weak, throbbing heart of mine! I cannot, if I would, hide it from you.—Find him out, for Heaven's sake, Maria; tell me—yet what now is Savillon to your Julia?—No matter—do any thing your prudence may suggest; only satisfy me about the fate of this once dear—Again! I dare not trust myself on the subject—Mons. de Montauban!—Farewell!

Delay not a moment to answer this.—

Yet do not write, till you have learned something satisfactory.

At

At any rate, write me speedily.—

I have forgotten the name of the hotel,
where the lad met him ; it was situated in
the Rue St. Anne.

LETTER XXXV.

Montauban to Segarva.

MY wife (that word must often come across the narration of a married man) has been a good deal indisposed of late. You will not joke me on this intelligence, as such of my neighbours whom I have seen have done; it is not however what they say, or you may think; her spirits droop more than her body; she is thoughtful and melancholy when she thinks she is not observed, and, what pleases me worse, affects to appear otherwise, when she is. I like not this sadness which is conscious of itself. Yet, perhaps, I have seen her thus before our marriage,

marriage, and have rather admired this turn of mind than disapproved of it; but now I would not have her pensive—nor very gay neither—I would have nothing about her, methinks, to stir a question in me whence it arose. She should be contented with the affection she knows I bear for her. I do not expect her to be romantically happy, and she has no cause for uneasiness—I am not uneasy either—yet I wish her to conquer this melancholy.

I was last night abroad at supper: Julia was a-bed before my return. I found her lute lying on the table, and a music-book open by it. I could perceive the marks of tears shed on the paper, and the air was such as might encourage their falling: sleep however had overcome her

sadness, and she did not awake when I opened the curtains to look on her. When I had stood some moments, I heard her sigh strongly through her sleep, and presently she muttered some words, I know not of what import. I had sometimes heard her do so before, without regarding it much; but there was something that roused my attention now. I listened; she sighed again, and again spoke a few broken words; at last, I heard her plainly pronounce the name *Savillon*, two or three times over, and each time it was accompanied with sighs so deep, that her heart seemed bursting as it heaved them. I confess the thing struck me, and, after musing on it some time, I resolved to try a little experiment this day at dinner, to discover whether chance had made her pronounce this name, or if

if some previous cause had impressed it on her imagination. I knew a man of that name at Paris, when I first went thither, who had an office under the intendant of the marine. I introduced some conversation on the subject of the fleet, and said, in an indifferent manner, that I had heard so and so from my old acquaintance Savillon. She spilt some soup she was helping me to at the instant; and, stealing a glance at her, I saw her cheeks flushed into crimson.

I have been ever since going the round of conjecture on this incident. I think I can recollect once, and but once, her father speak of a person called Savillon residing abroad, from whom he had received a letter; but I never heard Julia mention him at all. I know not why I

F 4 should

should have forbore asking her the reason of her being so affected at the sound ; yet, at the moment I perceived it, the question stuck in my throat. I felt something like guilt hang over this incident altogether—it is none of mine then—nor of Julia's neither, I trust—and yet, Segarva, it has touched me nearer—much nearer than I should own to any one but you.

Nine at night.

Upon looking over what I had written in the afternoon, I had almost resolved to burn this letter, and write another ; but it strikes me as insincerity to a friend like Segarva, not to trust him with the very thought of the moment, weak as it may be.

I begin

I begin now to be ashamed of the effect that trifle, I mentioned above, had upon me. Julia is better, and has been singing to me the old Spanish ballad, which you sent us lately. I am delighted with those ancient national songs, because there is a simplicity, and an expression in them, which I can understand. Adepts in music are pleased with more intricate compositions ; and they talk more of the pleasure than they feel ; and others talk after them, without feeling at all.

* * * * *

LETTER XXXVI.

Savillon to Herbert.

I AM here in Paris, and fulfil the promise, which your friendship required of me, to write to you immediately on my arrival.

Alas! my reception is not such as I looked for. He, whom alone my arrival should have interested, my ever faithful Beauvaris!—he meets me not—we shall never meet—he died, while I was imagining fond things of our meeting!

Gracious God! what have I done, that I should be always thus an outcast
from

from society ? When France was dear to me as life itself, my destiny tore me from her coast ; now, when I anticipated the pleasures of my return, is this the welcome she affords me ?

Forlorn and friendless as my early days were, I complained not while Beauvaris was mine : he was wholly mine, for his heart was not made for the world. Naturally reserved, he shrank early from its notice ; and, when he had lived to judge of its sentiments, he wished not to be in the list of its friends.

His extreme modesty, indeed, was an evil in his fate ; because it deprived him of that protection and assistance, which his situation required. Those who might have been patrons of his merit, had not

time to search for talents his bashfulness obscured. His virtues even suffered imputation from it: shy, not only of intimacy, but even of opinion and sentiment, persons, whose situation seemed to entitle them to his confidence, complained of his coldness and indifference, and he was accused of want of feeling, from what, in truth, was an excess of sensibility. This jewel, undiscovered by others, was mine. From infancy, each had accustomed himself to consider his friend but a better part of himself; and, when the heart of either was full, talking to the other was but unloading it in soliloquy.

Forgive me, my dear Herbert, for thus dwelling on the subject. The only sad comfort I have now left me, is to think of his worth: it is a privilege I

would not waste on common minds, to hear me on this theme; yours can understand it.

Why was I absent from Paris? Too much did the latter days of Beauvaris require me! They saw him struggling with poverty as well as sickness; yet the last letter he wrote me confessed neither; and some little presents, the produce of Martinique, which I sent him, he would not convert into money, because they came from me.

I am now sitting in the room, in which he died!—On that paltry bed lay the head of Beauvaris—on this desk, whereon I write, he wrote!—Pardon me a while, I am unable to go on.

It

It is from the indulgence of sorrow, that we first know a respite from affliction. I have given a loose to my grief, and I feel the relief, which my tears have afforded me. I am now returned to my hotel, and am able to recollect myself.

I have not yet seen any acquaintance of Mons. de Roubigné; this blow, indeed, did not allow me leisure or spirits for enquiry; I feel as if I were in a foreign land, and am almost afraid of the noise and bustle I hear in the streets. I have sent, however, offering a visit to a particular young lady, of whom I shall be able to get intelligence of Roubigné's family; but my messenger is not yet returned.

He

He has found her, and she has appointed me to come to her to-morrow morning. You cannot imagine what a flutter the expectation of this visit has thrown me into; I am not apt to stand in awe of presages, but I could be very weak that way at this moment. My man, who possesses a happy vivacity, brought me in, after dinner, a bottle of Burgundy, which, he said, the landlord assured him was excellent. I have drunk three-fourths of it, by way of medicine; it has made my head somewhat dizzy, but my heart is as heavy as before.

What a letter of egotism have I written! but you have taught me to give vent to my feelings, by the acquaintance

ance you have allowed me with yours. To speak one's distresses to the unfeeling is terrible ; even to ask the alms of pity is humiliating ; but to pour our griefs into the bosom of a friend, is but committing to him a pledge above the trust of ordinary men.

Do not, I beseech you, forget your design of travelling into France this season ;—yet why should I ask this ? I know not where fortune may lead me ! it cannot, however, place me in a situation, where the friendship of Herbert shall be forgotten.

P. S. I direct this for you at London, as, I think, you must be there by this time. Your answer will find me here ; let it be speedy.

LETTER XXXVII.

Savillon to Herbert.

BEAR with me, Herbert, bear with me. The first use I make of that correspondence which you desired, is to pour out my miseries before you! but you can hear them.—You have known what it is to love, and to despair as I do.

When I told you my Beauvaris was no more, I thought I had exhausted the sum of distress, which this visit to Paris was to give me. I knew not then what fate had prepared for me—that Julia, on whom my doating heart had rested all

its

its hopes of happiness;—that Julia is the wife of another!

All but this I could have born; the loss of fortune, the decay of health, the coldness of friends, might have admitted of hope; here only was despair to be found, and here I have found it!

Oh! Herbert! she was so interwoven with my thoughts of futurity, that life now fades into a blank, and is not worth the keeping;—but I have a use for it; I will see her yet at least—Wherefore should I wish to see her?—Yet, methinks, it is now the only object that can prompt a wish in me.

When I visited that lady, that Maria de Roncilles, whom I knew to be the dearest of

of her friends, she seemed to receive me with confusion ; her tongue could scarce articulate the words that told me of Julia's marriage : She mentioned something too of having heard of mine.—I am tortured every way with conjecture—my brain scarce holds its recollection.—Julia de Roubigné is married to another !

I know not what I said to this friend of hers at first ; I remember only that, when I had recovered a little, I begged her to convey a letter from me to Julia ; she seemed to hesitate in her consent ; but she did at last consent. Twice have I written, and twice have I burnt what I had written—I have no friend to guide, to direct me—not even to weep to !

At

At last I have finished that letter ; it contains the last request which the miserable Savillon has to make. This one interview past, and my days have nothing to mark them with anxiety or hope.

I am now more calmly wretched ; the writing of that letter has relieved, for a while, my swelling heart. I went with it myself to Mademoiselle de Roncilles's ; she was abroad, so I left it without seeing her. You can judge of my feelings ; I wondered at the indifference of the faces I met with in my way ; they had no cares to cloud them, none at least like Savillon's.—Why of all those thousands am I the most wretched ?

I am

I am returned to my hotel. I hear the voices of my servants below:—they are telling, I suppose, the adventures of their voyage. I can distinguish the voice of my man, and his audience are merry around him—Why should he not jest? he knows not what his master suffers.

Something like a stupid sleepiness oppresses me: last night, I could not sleep. Where are now those luxurious slumbers, those wandering dreams of future happiness?—Never shall I know them again!—Good night, my Herbert!—It is something still to sleep and to forget them.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Julia to Maria.

WHAT do you tell me! Savillon in Paris! unmarried, unengaged, raving of Julia! Hide me from myself, Maria, hide me from myself—Am I not the wife of Montauban?—

Yes, and I know that character which, as the wife of Montauban, I have to support: her husband's honour and her own are in the breast of Julia. My heart swells, while I think of the station in which I am placed.—Relentless Honour! thou triest me to the uttermost; thou enjoinest

me

me to think no more of such a being as Savillon.

But can I think of him no more?—Cruel remembrances! — Thou too, my friend, betrayest me; you dare not trust me with the whole scene; but you tell me enough.—I see him, I see him now! He came, unconscious of what Fortune had made of me; he came, elate with the hopes of sharing with his Julia that wealth, which propitious Heaven had bestowed on him.—She is married to another!—I see him start back in amazement and despair; his eye wild and haggard, his voice lost in the throb of astonishment! He thinks on the shadows which his fond hopes had reared—the dreams of happiness!—Say not that he wept at the thought.—Had those tears fallen

fallen upon Julia's grave, Memory ! thou couldst not thus have stung me. But, perhaps, gentle as his nature is, he was not weak enough to be overcome by the thought. Could he but think of me with indifference—Tell him, Maria, what a wretch I am : a wife, without a wife's affection, to whom life has lost its relish, and virtue its reward. Let him hate me, I deserve his scorn—yet, methinks, I may claim his pity.—

The daughter of Roubigné, the wife of Montauban ! I will not bear to be pitied. No ; I will stifle the grief that would betray me, and be miserable without a witness. This heart shall break, this proud heart, without suffering a sigh to relieve it.

Alas !

Alas ! my friend, it will not be.—
That picture, Maria, that picture !—
Why did I not banish it from my sight ?
too amiable Savillon ! Look there, look
there ! in that eye there is no scorn, no
reproach to the unhappy Julia : mildness
and melancholy !—We were born to be
miserable !—Think'st thou, Maria, that
at this moment—it is possible—he is gazing
thus on the resemblance of one, whose
ill-fated rashness has undone herself and
him !—Will he thus weep over it as I do ?
Will he pardon my offences, and thus
press it ?—I dare not : this bosom is
the property of Montauban.—Tears are
all I have to bestow. Is there guilt in
those tears ? Heaven knows, I cannot
help weeping.

I was interrupted by the voice of my husband, giving some orders to his servant at the door of my apartment. He entered with a look of gaiety ; but I fear, by the change of his countenance, that he observed my tears. I clapped on my hat to hide them, and told him, as well as I could, that I was going to walk. He suffered me to leave him, without any further question. I strolled I knew not whither, till I found myself by the side of a little brook, about a quarter of a mile's distance from the house. The stillness of noon, broken only by the gentle murmuring of the water, and the quiet hum of the bees, that hung on the wild flowers around it ; these gave me back myself, and allowed me the languor

guor of thought; my tears fell without controul, and almost without distress. I would have looked again on the picture of Savillon, for I could then have trusted myself with the sight of it; but I had left it behind in my chamber. The thoughts of its being seen by my husband gave wings to my return. I hope he missed it; for I found it lying, as I had left it, on my dressing-table, in the midst of some letters of compliment, which had been thrown carelesly there the day before; and, when I went down stairs, I discovered nothing in his behaviour that should have followed such a discovery. On the contrary, I think, he seemed more pleased than usual, and was particularly attentive to me. I felt his kindness a reproach, and my endeavours to return it sat aukwardly upon me. There

was a treachery, methought, in my attempts to please him, and, I fear,- the greater ease I meant to assume in making those attempts, I gave them only more the appearance of constraint.

What a situation is mine! to wear the appearance of serenity, while my heart is wretched, and the dissimulation of guilt, though my soul is unconscious of a crime!—There is something predictive in my mind, that tells me I shall not long be thus; but I am sick of conjecture, as I am bereft of hope, and only satisfy myself with concluding, that, in the most fateful lives, there is still a certain point, where the maze of destiny can bewilder no more!

LETTER XXXIX.

Montauban to Segarva.

SEGARVA!—but it must be told—I blush even telling it to thee—have I lived to this?—that thou shouldst hear the name of Montauban coupled with dishonour!

I came into my wife's room yesterday morning, somewhat unexpectedly. I observed she had been weeping, though she put on her hat to conceal it, and spoke in a tone of voice affectedly indifferent. Presently she went out on pretence of walking; I staid behind, not without surprise at her tears, though, I think, without suspicion; when turning over

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(in the careleſs way one does in musing) some loose papers on her dressing-table, I found the picture of a young man in miniature, the glass of which was still wet with the tears she had ſhed on it. I have but a confused remembrance of my feelings at the time ; there was a bewildered pause of thought, as if I had waked in another world. My faithful Lonquillez happened to enter the room at that moment ; look there ! said I, holding out the picture without knowing what I did ; he held it in his hand, and turning it, read on the back, Savillon. I ſtarted at that ſound, and snatched the picture from him ; I believe he ſpoke ſomewhat, expressing his ſurprise at my emotion ; I know not what it was, nor what my answer : he was retiring from the chamber — I called him back.—“ I think, (ſaid I) tho

thou lovest thy master, and would serve him if thou could'st?"—“With my life?” answered Lonquillez—the warmth of his manner touched me: I think I laid my hand on my sword. Savillon! I repeated the name; “I have heard of him,” said Lonquillez.—“Heard of him!”—“I heard Le Blanc talk of him a few days ago.”—“And what did he say of him?”—“And said he had heard of this gentleman's arrival from the West-Indies, from his own nephew, who had just come from Paris; that he remembered him formerly, when he lived with his master at Belville, the sweetest young gentleman, and the handsomest in the province.”—My situation struck me at that instant.—I was unable to enquire further.—After some little time, Lonquillez left the room; I knew not that he was

gone, till I heard him going down stairs. I called him back a second time; he came: I could not speak.—“ My dear master!” (said Lonquillez)—It was the accent of a friend, and it overcame me.

“ Lonquillez, (said I) your master is most unhappy!—Canst thou think my wife is false to me?”—“ Heaven forbid!” said he, and started back in amazement.—“ It may be I wrong her; but to dream of Savillon, to keep his picture, to weep over it.”—“ What shall I do, Sir?” said Lonquillez.—“ You see I am calm, I returned, and will do nothing rashly;—try to learn from Le Blanc every thing he knows about this Savillon. Lifette too is silly, and talks much. I know your faith, and will trust your capacity; get me what intelligence you can,

can, but beware of shewing the most distant suspicion.—We heard my wife below;—I threw down the picture where I had found it, and hastened to meet her. As I approached her, my heart throbbed so violently that I durst not venture the meeting. My dressing-room door stood ajar; I slunk in there, I believe, unperceived, and heard her pass on to her chamber. I would have called Lonquillez to have spoken to him again; but I durst not then, and have not found an opportunity since.

I saw my wife soon after; I counterfeited as well as I could, and, I think, she was the most embarrassed of the two; she attempted once or twice to bring in some apology for her former appearance; complained of having been ill in the

morning, that her head had ached, and her eyes been hot and uneasy.

She came herself to call me to dinner. We dined alone, and I marked her closely ; I saw, (by Heaven ! I did) a fawning solicitude to please me, an attempt at the good-humour of innocence, to cover the embarrassment of guilt. I should have observed it, I am sure I should, even without a key ; as it was, I could read her soul to the bottom.—Julia de Roubigné ! the wife of Montauban !—Is it not so ?

I have had time to think.—You will recollect the circumstances of our marriage—her long unwillingness, her almost uncon-

unconquerable reluctance.—Why did I marry her?

Let me remember—I durst not trust the honest decision of my friend, but stole into this engagement without his knowledge; I purchased her consent, I bribed, I bought her; bought her, the leavings of another!—I will trace this line of infamy no further: there is madness in it!

Segarva, I am afraid to hear from you; yet write to me, write to me freely. If you hold me justly punished—yet spare me, when you think on the severity of my punishment

LETTER XL.

Montauban to Segarva.

LONGUILLEZ has not slept on his post, and chance has assisted his vigilance. Le Blanc came hither the morning after our conversation: Lonquillez managed his enquiry with equal acuteness and caution: the other told every thing as the story of an old man—he smiled and told it. He knew not that he was delivering the testimony of a witness—that the fate of his former mistress hung on it!

This Savillon lived at Belville from his earliest youth, the companion of Julia,

lia, though a dependant on her father. When they were forced to remove thence, he accompanied their retreat, the only companion of Roubigné, whom adversity had left him to comfort it—but he had his reward: the company of the daughter often supplied the place of her father's. He was her master in literature, her fellow-scholar in music and painting, and they frequently planned walks in concert, which they afterwards trod together.—Le Blanc has seen them there, listening to the song of the nightingale.—

I am to draw the conclusion.—All this might be innocent, the effects of early intimacy and friendship; and on this supposition might rest the quiet of an indifferent husband. But why was this intimacy,

intimacy, this friendship, so industriously concealed from me? The name of Savillon never mentioned, except in guilty dreams? while his picture was kept in her chamber for the adultery of the imagination!—Do I triumph while I push this evidence?—Segarva! whither will it lead me?

The truth rises upon me, and every succeeding circumstance points to one conclusion. Lifette was to-day of a junketing party, which Lonquillez contrived for the entertainment of his friend Le Blanc. Mention was again made of old stories, and Savillon was a person of the drama. The wench is naturally talkative, and she was then in spirits from company and good cheer. Le Blanc and

she

she recollects interviews of their young mistress and this handsome *eleve* of her father. They were, it seems, nursed by the same woman, that old Lafune, for whom Julia procured a little dwelling, and a pension of four hundred livres, from her unsuspecting husband. “ She loved them (said Le Blanc) like her own children, and they were like brother and sister to each other.” — “ Brother and sister, indeed !” (said Lisette.) She was more sagacious, and had observed things better.—“ I know what I know, (said she) but, to be sure, those things are all over now, and, I am persuaded, my mistress loves no man so well as her own husband. What signifies what happened so long ago, especially while Mons. de Montauban knows nothing about the matter ?”

These were her words: Lonquillez repeated them thrice to me.—Were I a fool, a driveller, I might be satisfied to doubt and be uneasy; it is Montauban's to see his disgrace, and, seeing, to revenge it.

Lonquillez has been with me: his diligence is indefatigable; but he feels for the honour of his master, and, being a Spaniard, is entitled to share it.

He went with Le Blanc to see Lasune, whom that old man, it seems, never fails to visit when he is here: Lonquillez told her, that Le Blanc had news for her about her foster-son. “Of my dear Sävillon?” cried she. “Yes (said Le Blanc). You will have heard, that he arrived.

arrived from abroad some weeks ago ; and I am told, that he is worth a power of money, which his uncle left him in the West-Indies." — " Bless him ! Heavens bless him ! (cried Lafune.) Then I may see him once more before I die. You never saw him, (turning to Lonquillez) but Le Blanc remembers him well: the handsomest, sweetest, best conditioned—your mistress and he have often sat on that bench there—Lord pity my forgetfulness !—it was far from this place ; but it was just such a bench—and they would prefer poor Lafune's little treat to all the fine things at my master's—and how he would look on my sweet child !—Well, well, destiny rules every thing ; but there was a time, when I thought I should have called her by another name than Montauban."—Lonquillez was too much struck

struck with her words to appear unaffected by them : she observed his surprise.—“ You think no harm, I hope,” said she. He assured her he did not. “ Nay, I need not care, for that part, who hears me, yet some folks might think it odd ; but we are all friends here, as we may say, and neither of you, I know, are tale-bearers, otherwise I should not prattle as I do ; especially, as the last time I saw my lady, when I asked after her foster-brother, she told me, I must not speak of him now, nor talk of the meetings they used to have at my house.”

Such were her words ; the memory of Lonquillez is faithful, and he was interested to remember.—I drew my breath short, and muttered vengeance : the good fellow saw my warmth, and tried to moderate

derate it. “ It is a matter, Sir, (said he) of such importance, that, if I may presume to advise, nothing should be believed rashly. If my mistress loves Savillon, if he still answers her fondness, they will surely write to each other. I commonly take charge of the letters for the post: if you can find any proof thatway, it cannot lie nor deceive you.”

I have agreed to his proposal.—How am I fallen, Segarva, when such artifices are easy to me!—But I will not pause on trivial objections—the fate of Montauban is set upon this cast, and the lesser moralities must speak unheeded.

LETTER XLI.

Montauban to Segarva.

IT is something to be satisfied of the worst. I have now such proof, Segarva! —Enquiry is at an end, and vengeance the only business I have left. Before you can answer this—the infamy of your friend cannot be erased, but it shall be washed in blood!

Lonquillez has just brought me a letter from my wife to a Mademoiselle de Roncilles, a bosom-friend of hers at Paris. He opened it, by a very simple operation, without hurting its appearance. It consisted only of a few hurried lines, desir-

ing

ing her to deliver an enclosed letter to Savillon, and to take charge of his answer.—That letter now lies before me.—Read it, Segarva—thou wilt wish to stab her while thou read'st it—but Montauban has a dagger too.

“ I know not, Sir, how to answer the
“ letter my friend Mademoiselle de Ron-
“ cilles has just sent me from you. *The*
“ *intimacy of our former days I still recal, as*
“ *one of the happiest periods of my life.* The
“ friendship of Julia you are certainly still
“ entitled to, and might claim, without
“ the suspicion of impropriety, though fate
“ has now thrown her into *the arms of an-*
“ *other.* There would then be no occasion
“ for this secret interview, which, I con-
“ fess, I cannot help dreading; but, as
“ you urge the impossibility of your visiting

*

“ Mons.

“ Mons. de Montauban, without betraying
“ emotions, which, you say, would be danger-
“ ous to the peace of us all, conjured as I am
“ by those motives of compassion, which
“ my heart is, perhaps, but too susceptible
“ of for my own peace, I have at last, *not*
“ without a feeling like remorse, resolved to
“ meet you on Monday next, at the house
“ of our old nurse Lafune, *whom I shall*
“ *prepare for the purpose, and on whose fide-*
“ *lity I can perfectly rely.* I hope you will
“ give me credit for that remembrance of
“ Savillon, which your letter, rather un-
“ justly, denies me, when you find me
“ agreeing to this measure of imprudence,
“ of danger, *it may be of guilt*, to mitigate
“ the distress, which I have been unfortu-
“ nate enough to give him.”

I feel

I feel at this moment a sort of determined coolness, which the bending up of my mind to the revenge her crimes deserve, has conferred upon me; I have therefore underlined * some passages in this damned scroll, that my friend may see the weight of that proof on which I proceed. Mark the air of prudery that runs through it, the trick of voluptuous vice to give pleasure the zest of nicety and reluctance. "It may be of guilt."—Mark with what coolness she invites him to participate it!—Is this the hand-writing of Julia?—I am awake and see it.—Julia! my wife! damnation!

* The passages here alluded to are printed in *Italics*.

I have

I have been visiting this Lafune, whose house is destined for the scene of my wife's interview with her gallant. I feel the meanness of an inquisition, that degrades me into the wretched spy on an abandoned woman.—I blushed and hesitated while I talked to this old doating minister of their pleasures. But the moment comes when I shall resume myself, when I shall burst upon them in the terrors of punishment.

Whether they have really imposed on the simplicity of this creature, I know not; but her answers to some distant questions of mine looked not like those of an accomplice of their guilt.—Or, rather, it is I who am deceived; the cunning

ning of intrigue is the property of the meanest among the sex.—It matters not : I have proof without her.

She conducted me into an inner room fitted up with a degree of nicety. On one side stood a bed, with curtains and a bed-cover of clean cotton. That bed, Segarva !—but this heart shall down ; I will be calm—at the time, while I looked on it, I could not ; the old woman observed my emotion, and asked if I was ill ; I recovered myself however, and she suspected nothing ; I think she did not—It looked as if the Beldame had trimmed it for their use—damn her ! damn her ! killing is poor—Canst thou not invent me some luxurious vengeance ?

Lonquillez has re-sealed and sent off her letter to Savillon ; he will take care to bring me the answer : but I know the answer—"On Monday next"—why should I start as I think on it ? — Their fate is fixed ! mine perhaps—but I will think no more.—Farewell.

Rouillé is just arrived here ; I could have wished him absent now. He cannot participate my wrongs ; they are sacred to more determined souls.—Methinks, at this time, I hate his smiles ; they suit not the purposes of Montauban.

LETTER XLII.

Julia to Maria.

I Hope, from the conveyance which Lisette has procured for this letter, it may reach you nearly as soon, as that in which I inclosed one for Savillon. If it comes in time, let it prevent your delivering that letter. I have been considering of this interview again, and I feel a sort of crime in it towards my husband, which I dare not venture on. I have trespassed too much against sincerity already, in concealing from him my former attachment to that unfortunate young man. So strongly indeed did this idea strike me, that I was prepared to tell it

him this very day, when he returned from riding, and found me scarce recovered from the emotion which a reperusal of Savillon's letter had caused; but his look had a sternness in it, so opposite to those feelings which should have opened the bosom of your distracted Julia, that I shrunk back into secrecy, terrified at the reflection on my own purpose.—Why am I the wife of this man? but if confidence and tenderness are not mine to give, there is a duty which is not mine to refuse.—Tell Savillon, I cannot see him.

Not in the way he asks—let him come as the friend of Julia de Roubigné—Oh! Maria! what a picture do these words recal! the friend of Julia de Roubigné! —in those happy days when it was not guilt to see, to hear, to think of him—
when

when this poor heart was unconscious of its little wanderings, or felt them but as harmless dreams, which sweetened the real ills of a life too early visited by misfortune !

When I look back on that life, how fateful has it been ! Is it unjust in Providence, to make this so often the lot of hearts little able to struggle with misfortune ? or is it indeed the possession of such hearts, that creates their misfortunes ? Had I not felt as I have done, half the ills I complain of had been nothing, and at this moment I were happy. Yet to have wanted such a heart, ill-suited as it is to the rude touch of sublunary things—I think I cannot wish so much. There will come a time, Maria, (might I forebode without your censure, I should

H 3 say

say it may not be distant) when they shall wound it no longer!

In truth, I am every way weak at present. My poor father adds much to my distresses: he has appeared, for some time past, to be verging towards a state, which alone I should think worse than his death. His affection for me is the only sense now quite alive about him, nay it too partakes of imbecillity. He used to embrace me with ardour; he now embraces me with tears.

Judge then, if I am able to meet Savillon at this time, if I could allow myself to meet him at all. Think what I am, and what he is. The coolness I ought to maintain had been difficult at best; at present, it is impossible. I can scarce

scarce think without weeping ; and to see
that form—

Maria ! when this picture was drawn !
—I remember the time well—my father
was at Paris, and Savillon left with my
mother and me at Belville. The painter
(who was accidentally in our province)
came thither to give me a few lessons of
drawing. Savillon was already a toler-
able designer ; but he joined with me in
becoming scholar to this man. When
our master was with us, he used some-
times to guide my hand ; when he was
gone, at our practice of his instructions,
Savillon commonly supplied his place.
But Savillon's hand was not like the
other's : I felt something from its touch,
not the less delightful from carrying a sort

of fear along with that delight: it was like a pulse in the soul!—

Whither am I wandering? What now are those scenes to me, and why should I wish to remember them? Am I not another's, irrevocably another's?—Savillon knows I am.—Let him not wish to see me: we cannot recal the past, and wherefore, wherefore should we add to the evils of the present?

LETTER XLIII.

Montauban to Segarva.

I HAVE missed some link of my intelligence; for the day is past, and no answer from Savillon is arrived. I thank him, whatever be the reason, for he has given me time to receive the instructions of my friend.

You caution me well as to the certainty of her guilt. You know the proof I have already acquired; but I will have assurance beyond the possibility of doubt: I will wait their very meeting, before I strike this blow, and my vengeance, like

that of Heaven, shall be justified by a repetition of her crimes.

I am less easily convinced, or rather I am less willing to be guided, by your opinion, as to the secrefy of her punishment. You tell me, that there is but one expiation of a wife's infidelity.—I am resolved, she dies—but that the sacrifice should be secret. Were I even to upbraid her with her crime, you say, her tears, her protestations would outplead the conviction of sense itself, and I should become the dupe of that infamy I am bound to punish.—Is there not something like guilt in this secrefy? Should Montauban shrink, like a coward, from the vindication of his honour?—Should he not burst upon this strumpet and her

lover

‡

lover—the picture is beastly—the sword of Montauban!—thou art in the right, it would disgrace it.—Let me read your letter again.

I am a fool to be so moved—but your letter has given me back myself. “The disgrace is only published by an open revenge: it can be buried with the guilty by a secret one.”—I am yours, Segarva, and you shall guide me.

Chance has been kind to me for the means. Once, in Andalusia, I met with a Venetian empiric, of whom, among other chymical curiosities, I bought a poisonous drug, the efficacy of which he shewed me on some animals to whom he administered it. The death it gave was

H 6 easy,

easy, and altered not the appearance of the thing it killed.

I have fetched it from my cabinet, and it stands before me. It is contained in a little square phial, marked with some hieroglyphic scrawls, which I do not understand. Methinks, while I look on it—I could be weak, very weak, Segarva.—But an hour ago I saw her walk, and speak, and smile—yet these few drops!—I will look on it no more.—

I hear the tread of her feet in the apartment above. Did she know what passes in my mind!—the study in which I sit seems the cave of a demon!

Lonquillez has relieved me again. He has this moment got from her maid the fol-

following letter, addressed to her friend Mademoiselle de Roncilles. What a sex it is ! but I have heard of their alliances of intrigue.—It is not that these things are uncommon, but that Montauban is a fool—a husband—a—perdition seize her !

‘ Is my friend too leagued against me ?
‘ Alas ! my virtue was too feeble before,
‘ and needed not the addition of Maria’s
‘ arguments to be overcome. Savillon’s
‘ figure, you say, aided by that languid
‘ paleness, which his late illness had given
‘ it, was irresistible.—Why is not Julia
‘ sick ? — yet, wretched as she is, irre-
‘ trievably wretched, she breathes, and
‘ walks, and speaks, as she did in her most
‘ happy days ! —

‘ You



‘ You intreat me, for pity’s sake, to meet
‘ him.—“ He hinted his design of soon
‘ leaving France to return to Martinique.”
‘ —Why did he ever leave France? Had
‘ he remained contented with love and
‘ Julia, instead of this stolen, this guilty
‘ meeting—What do I say?—I live but
‘ for Montauban!

‘ I will think no longer.—This one
‘ time I will silence the monitor within me.
‘ —Tell him, I will meet him. On Thurs-
‘ day next, let him be at Lafune’s in the
‘ evening: it will be dark by six.

‘ I dare not read what I have written.
‘ Farewell.’

It will be dark by six.—Yet I will keep my word, Segarva! they shall meet, that certainty may precede my vengeance; but, when they part, they part to meet no more. Lonquillez's fidelity I know: his soul is not that of a servant: he shall provide for Savillon. Julia is a victim above him—Julia shall be the charge of his master.

Farewell! when I write again, it shall not be to threaten.

LETTER XLIV.

Savillon to Herbert.

AFTER an interval of torture, I have at last received an answer from Madame de Montauban—Have I lived to write that name!—but it is fit that I be calm.

Her friend has communicated her resolution of allowing me to see her in the house of that good Lafune, whom I have mentioned to you in some of our conversations, as the common nurse of both. Were it not madness to look back, and that, at present, I need the full possession of myself, the idea of Lafune's house would

would recal such things—but they are past, never, never to return !

I have recovered and can go on calmly. I set out to-morrow morning ; Thursday next is the day she has appointed for our interview. I have but to dispatch this one great business, and then depart from my native country for ever. Every tie that bound me to this world is now broken, except that which accident gave me in your friendship : before I cross the Atlantic, I would once more see my Herbert ; when I have indulged myself in that last throb of affection, which our friendship demands at parting, there remains nothing for me to do, but to shrink up from all the feelings of life,

life, and look forward, without emotion, to its close !

I feel, at this moment, as if I were on my death-bed, the necessity of a manly composure ; that stifled sigh was the last sacrifice of my weakness ! I am now thinking what I have to do with the hours that remain : meet me like a man, and help me to employ them as I ought. Nothing shall drag me back to Europe, and therefore I would shake off every occasion to revisit it.

Though the externals of place and distance are not of much importance to me, yet there is something in large towns that I wish to avoid. As you mention a design

sign of being in Dorsetshire sometime soon, may I ask you to make next week that time, and meet me at the town of Poole in that county? Inconsiderable and unknown as I am, there are circumstances that might mark me out in Picardy; and therefore I shall go by Dieppe to that port of England, where I know I shall, at this season, find an opportunity of getting over the Atlantic.

I inclose a letter to a merchant in London, relating to some business, in which my uncle was concerned with the house, of which he is a partner. Be so kind as forward it, and let him know, that I desire the answer may be committed to your care. As I see, by his correspondence, that he is not altogether a man of business, he may perhaps be desirous of

of meeting with you, to ask some questions about the nephew of his old acquaintance. He will wonder, as others will, at so rich a man returning to Martinique. If a reason is necessary, invent some one; it is peculiar to misery like mine to be incapable of being told.—I shall relapse, if I continue to write.—You will, if it is possible, meet me at Poole; if not, write to me thither, where I shall find you. Let your letter wait me at the post-house. Farewell.

LETTER XLV.

Julia to Maria.

THE hour is almost arrived! My husband has just left me: he came into my room in his riding-dress.—“I shall not be at home (said he) till supper-time, and Rouillé’s shooting party will detain him till it is late.”—The consciousness of my purpose pressed on my tongue while I answered him: I faltered, and could hardly speak. “You speak faintly (said Montauban). You are not ill, I hope,” taking my hand. I told him, truly, that my head ached a good deal, that it had ached all day, that I meant to try if a walk would do it service.

vice. “Perhaps it may,” answered he, and methought he looked steadily, and with a sort of question, at me; or rather my own mind interpreted his look in that manner.—I believe I blushed.—

How I tremble as I look on my watch!
Would I could recal my promise!

I am somewhat bolder now; but it is not from having conquered my fear; something like despair assists me.—It wants but a few minutes—the hand that points them seems to speak as I watch it.—I come, Savillon, I come!

How shall I describe our meeting? I am unfit for describing—it cannot be described—I shall be calmer by and by.

I know

I know not how I got to the house. From the moment I quitted my chamber, I was unconscious of every thing around me. The first object that struck my eye was Savillon! I recollect my nurse placing me in a chair opposite to where he sat—she left us—I felt the room turning round with me—I had fainted, it seems. When I recovered, I found her supporting me in her arms, and holding a phial of salts to my nose. Savillon had my hands in his, gazing on me with a countenance of distress and terror.—My eye met his, and, for some moments, I looked on him, as I have done in my dreams, unmindful of our situation.—The pressure of his hand awakened me to recollection.

lection. He looked on me more earnestly still, and breathed out the word Julia!—It was all he could utter; but it spoke such things, Maria!—You cannot understand its force. Had you felt it as I did!—I could not, indeed I could not help bursting into tears.

“ My dearest children,” cried the good Lafune, taking our hands, which were still folded together, and squeezing them in hers. The action had something of that tender simplicity in it, which is not to be resisted. I wept afresh; but my tears were less painful than before.

She fetched a bottle of wine from a cupboard, and forced me to take a glass of it. She offered another to Savillon. He put it by, with a gentle inclination of his

his head. " You shall drink it, " indeed, my dear boy, (said she) it is a long time since you tasted any thing in this house." —He gave a deep sigh, and drank it.

She had given us time to recover the power of speech; but I knew less how to begin speaking than before. My eyes now found something in Savillon's, which they were ashamed to meet.—Lasune left us; I almost wished her to stay.

Savillon sat down in his former place: he threw his eyes on the ground—" I know not, (said he, in a faltering voice) how to thank you for the condescension of this interview—our former friendship—" I trembled for what he seemed about to say.—" I have not forgotten it," said I, half interrupting him.—I saw him

start from his former posture, as if awaked by the sound of my voice.—“ I ask not (continued he) to be remembered: I am unworthy of your remembrance.—In a short time, I shall be a voluntary exile from France, and breathe out the remains of life amidst a race of strangers, who cannot call forth those affections, that would henceforth be shut to the world!”

—“ Speak not thus, (I cried) for pity’s sake, speak not thus! Live, and be happy, happy as your virtues deserve, as Julia wishes you!” — “ Julia wish me happy!” — “ Oh! Savillon, you know not the heart that you wring thus! — If it has wronged you, you are revenged enough.” — “ Revenged! revenged on Julia! Heaven is my witness, I intreated this meeting, that my parting words might bless her!” — He fell on his knees before me—

“ May

“ May that Power (he cried), who formed this excellence, reward it! May every blessing this life can bestow, be the portion of Julia! May she be happy, long after the tongue that asks it, is silent for ever, and the heart, that now throbs with the wish, has ceased its throbbing!”—Had you seen him, Maria, as he uttered this! —What should I have done?—Weeping, trembling, unconscious, as it were, of myself, I spoke I know not what—told him the weakness of my soul, and lamented the destiny that had made me another’s. This was too much. When I could recollect myself, I felt that it was too much. I would have retracted what I had said: I spoke of the duty I owed to Montauban, of the esteem which his virtues deserved.—“ I have heard of his worth (said Savillon); I needed no proof

to be convinced of it ; he is the husband of Julia."—There was something in the tone of these last words, that undid my resolution again.—I told him of the false intelligence I had received of his marriage, without which no argument of prudence, no paternal influence, could have made me the wife of another.—He put his hand to his heart, and threw his eyes wildly to heaven.—I shrunk back at that look of despair, which his countenance assumed.—He took two or three hurried turns through the room ; then, resuming his seat, and lowering his voice, " It is enough (said he), I am fated to be miserable ! but the contagion of my destiny shall spread no farther.—This night I leave France for ever !"—" This night !" I exclaimed. " It must be so (said he, with a determined calmness) ; but before

I go,

I go, let me deposit in your hands this paper. It is a memorial of that Savillon, who was the friend of Julia!"— I opened it: it was a will, bequeathing his fortune to me. " This must not be (said I), this must not be. Think not, I conjure you, so despairingly of life; live to enjoy that fortune, which is so seldom the reward of merit like thine. I have no title to its disposal." " You have the best one (returned Savillon, still preserving his composure), I never valued wealth, but as it might render me, in the language of the world, more worthy of thee. To make it thine, was the purpose of my wishing to acquire it; to make it thine, is still in my power." " I cannot receive this, indeed I cannot. Think of the situation in which I stand." I pressed the paper upon him: he took it at last,

and pausing, as if he thought, for a moment—" You are right, there may be an impropriety in your keeping it.—Alas ! I have scarce a friend, to whom I can intrust any thing ; yet I may find one, who will see it faithfully executed."

He was interrupted by Lafune, who entered somewhat hurriedly, and told me, Lisette was come to fetch me, and that she had met my husband in her way to the house. " We must part then (said he), for ever !—let not a thought of the unfortunate Savillon disturb the happiness which Heaven allots to Julia ; she shall hear of him but once again—when that period arrives, it will not offend the happy Montauban, if she drops a tear to the memory of one, whose love was expiated by his sufferings!"—Maria ! was it

it a breach of virtue, if then I threw myself on his neck, if then I wept on his bosom? His look, his last look! I see it still! never shall I forget it!—

Merciful God! at whose altar I vowed fidelity to another! impute not to me as a crime the remembrance of Savillon;— thou canst see the purity of that heart, which bleeds at the remembrance!

Eleven at night.

You know my presentiments of evil; never did I feel them so strong as at present. I tremble to go to bed—the taper that burns by me is dim, and methinks my bed looks like a grave!

I was weak enough to call back Lifette. I pretended some little business for her; the poor girl observed that I looked ill, and asked if she should sit by me: I had almost said Yes, but had courage enough to combat my fears in that instance. She bid me Good night—there was somewhat solemn in her utterance of that Good-night; I fancy mine was not without its particular emphasis, for she looked back wistfully as I spoke.—

I will say my prayers and forget it; pray for me too, my friend.—I have need of your prayers, indeed I have—Good night to my dearest Maria !

If I have recollection enough—Oh ! my Maria !—I will be calm—it was but a dream—

a dream—will you blush for my weakness? yet hear me—if this should be the last time I shall ever write—the memory of my friend mingles with the thought!—yet methinks I could, at this time, beyond any other, die contented.

My fears had given way to sleep; but their impression was on my fancy still. Methought I sat in our family-monument at Belville, with a single glimmering lamp, that shewed the horrors of the place, when, on a sudden, a light like that of the morning, burst on the gloomy vault, and the venerable figures of my fathers, such as I had seen them in the pictures of our hall, stood smiling benignity upon me! The attitude of the foremost was that of attention, his finger resting upon his lip.—I listened—when

ounds of more than terrestrial melody stole on my ear, borne, as it were, on the distant wind, till they swelled at last to music so exquisite, that my ravished sense was stretched too far for delusion, and I awoke in the midst of the intran-
ment !

I rose, with the memory of the sounds full upon my mind ; the candle I had ordered to stand by me was still unextin-
guished. I sat down to the organ, and, with that small soft stop you used to call seraphic, endeavoured to imitate their beauty. And never before did your Ju-
lia play an air so heavenly, or feel such extasy in the power of sound ! When I had catched the solemn chord that last arose in my dream, my fingers dwelt involuntarily on the keys, and methought

I saw the guardian spirits around me,
listening with a rapture like mine!—

But it will not last—the blissful delu-
sion is gone, and I am left a weak, an
unhappy woman still!—

I am sick at heart, Maria, and a faint-
ness like that of death—

The fit is over, and I am able to write
again ; and I will write while I am able.
Methinks, my friend, I am taking fare-
well of you, and I would lengthen out the
lingering words as much as I can. I
am just now recalling the scenes of
peaceful happiness we have enjoyed to-
gether.—I imagine I feel the arm of my

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lingering words as much as I can. I
am just now recalling the scenes of
peaceful happiness we have enjoyed to-
gether.—I imagine I feel the arm of my

Maria thrown round my neck—her tears
fall on my bosom!—Think of me when
I am gone.—This faintness again.—Fare-
well! farewell! perhaps—

LETTER XLVI.

Montauban to Segarva.

IT is done, Segarva, it is done!—the poor unthinking—Support me, my friend, support me with the thoughts of that vengeance I owe to my honour—the guilty Julia has but a few hours to live.

I did but listen a moment at the door; I thought I heard her maid upon the stairs—it is not yet the time.—Hark!—it was not my wife's bell—the clock struck eleven—never shall she hear it strike that hour again!—

Pardon

Pardon me, my Segarva; methinks I speak to you, when I scrawl upon this paper. I wish for somebody to speak to; to answer, to comfort, to guide me.—

Had you seen her, when these trembling hands delivered her the bowl!—She had complained of being ill, and begged to lie alone; but her illness seemed of the mind, and when she spoke to me, she betrayed the embarrassment of guilt. I gave her the drug as a cordial. She took it from me, smiling, and her look seemed to lose its confusion. She drank my health! She was dressed in a white silk bed-gown, ornamented with pale pink ribbands. Her cheek was gently flushed from their reflection; her blue eyes were turned upwards as she drank, and a dark-brown ringlet lay on her shoulder.—Me thinks

thinks I see her now—how like an angel she looked! Had she been innocent, Segarva!—You know, you know, it is impossible she can be innocent.

Let me recollect myself—a man, a soldier, the friend of Segarva!—

At the word *innocent* I stopped; I could scarce hold my pen; I rose from my seat, I know not why. Methought some one passed behind me in the room. I snatched up my sword in one hand, and a candle in the other.—It was my own figure in a mirror that stood at my back.—What a look was mine!—Am I a murderer?—Justice cannot murder, and the vengeance of Montauban is just.

Lon-

Lonquillez has been with me.—I durst not question him when he entered the apartment—but the deed is not done: he could not find Savillon. After watching for several hours, he met a peasant, whom he had seen attending him the day before, who informed him, that the strange gentleman had set off, some time after it grew dark, in a post-chaise, which drove away at full speed. Is my revenge then incomplete?—or is one victim sufficient to the injured honour of a husband?—What a victim is that one!

I went down stairs to let Lonquillez out by a private passage, of which I keep the key. When I was returning to my apartment, I heard the sound of music

music proceeding from my wife's chamber; there is a double door on it; I opened the outer one without any noise, and the inner has some panes of glass a-top, through which I saw a part of the room. Segarva! she sat at the organ, her fingers pressing on the keys, and her look up-raised with enthusiastic rapture! —the solemn sounds still ring in my ear! such as angels might play, when the sainted soul ascends to Heaven! I am the fool of appearances, when I have such proofs—Lisette is at my door.

It is now that I feel myself a coward; the horrid draught has begun to operate! —She thinks herself in danger; a physician is sent for, but he lives at a distance; before he arrives—Oh! Segarva!

She

She begged I would quit the chamber; she saw my confusion, and thought it proceeded from distress at her illness.—Can guilt be thus mistress of herself?—let me not think that way—my brain is too weak for it!—Lafitte again!

She is guilty, and I am not a murderer!
I go to—

LETTER XLVII.

Monsieur de Rouillé to Mademoiselle de Roncilles.

MADAM,

THE writer of this letter has no title to address you, except that which common friendship and common calamity may give him.

Amidst the fatal scenes, which he has lately witnessed, his recollection was lost; when it returned, it spoke of Mademoiselle de Roncilles, the first, he believes, and dearest friend of the most amiable, but most unfortunate Madame de Montauban. The office he now undertakes

is

is terrible; but it is necessary.—You must soon be told, that your excellent friend is no more! Hear it then from one, who knew her excellence, as you did; who tells the horrid circumstances of her death with a bleeding heart.—Yes, Madam, I must prepare you for horrors; and, while the remembrance tears my own bosom, assume the calmness that is necessary for yours.

On the evening of Thursday last, I was told Madame de Montauban was a good deal indisposed, and had gone to bed before her usual time. At a very short and silent supper, I perceived her husband uncommonly agitated, and, as soon as decency would allow me, withdrew and left him. Betwixt eleven and twelve o'clock, (I had not yet gone to bed) one

of

of the maid-servants came to my room, begging I would instantly attend her to the chamber of her mistress, who was so extremely ill, that, without immediate assistance, they feared the very worst consequences. I had formerly studied a little physic, and been in use to practise it in some particular campaigns, when abler assistance could not be had. I ran down stairs with the servant, desiring my own man to seek out a little case of lancets and follow us. The girl informed her mistress of my being at the door of her apartment. She desired I might come in, and with that smile, which sickness could not quench, stretched out her hand to me. I found her pulse low and weak, and she complained of a strange fluttering at her heart, which hardly allowed her to speak. I was afraid to venture on bleeding, and only

only gave her a little of some common restoratives that were at hand. She found herself somewhat relieved, and sat up in her bed supported by her maid. Montauban entered the room: his countenance surprised me: it was not that of distress alone, it was marked with turbulence and horror. It seemed to hurt his wife. At that moment she was scarce able to speak; but she forced out a few broken words, begging him to leave the room, for that her illness affected him too much. He withdrew in silence. In a little time, she seemed a good deal easier; but her pulse was still lower than before. She ordered her maid to call Mons. de Montauban again: "I dare not trust to future moments (said she), and I have something important to reveal to him."— I offered to leave the room as he entered.

" His

—“ His friend may hear it”—she said, in a faltering voice. She fixed her eye languidly, but steadily, on Montauban. He advanced towards her with an eager gaze, without uttering a word. When she would have spoken, her voice failed her again, and she beckoned, but with a modesty in her action, signifying her desire that he should sit down by her. She took his hand; he seemed unconscious of her taking it, and continued to bend a look of earnestness upon her.

When she had recovered the power of utterance, “ I feel, Sir, (said she) something in this illness predictive of the worst; at any rate, I would prepare for it. If I am now to die, I hope (lifting up her eyes with a certain meek assurance which it is impossible to paint) I die in

in peace with Heaven ! there is one account which I wish to settle with you. These moments of ease, which I enjoy, are allowed me to confess my offence, and intreat your forgiveness."

" Thou wert guilty then ?" — exclaimed her husband, starting from his seat. She paused in astonishment at the impasioned gesture he assumed — " Speak !" cried Montauban, recovering himself a little, his voice suffocated with the word.

" When you have heard me (said Julia), you will find, I am less guilty than unfortunate ; yet I am not innocent, for then I should not have been the wife of Montauban."

" When

“ When I became yours, my heart owned you not for the lord of its affections ; there was an attachment——yet look not so sternly on me.—He, in whose favour that prepossession was formed, would not have wronged you if he could. His virtues were the objects of my affection ; and had Savillon been the thing you fear, Julia had been guiltless even of loving him in secret. Till yesterday he never told me his love ; till yesterday he knew not I had ever loved him.”—

“ But yesterday,” cried Montauban, seeming to check the agitation he had shewn before, and lowering his voice into a tone of calm severity.

“ For the offence of yesterday, (said she) I would obtain your pardon, and

die in peace. I met Savillon in secret; I saw the anguish of his soul, and pitied it.—Was it a crime thus to meet him? Was it a crime to confess my love, while I received the last farewell of the unfortunate Savillon? This is my offence—perhaps the last that Julia can commit, or you forgive!"

He clasped his hands convulsively together, and throwing up to Heaven a look of despair, fell senseless into my arms. Julia would have sprung to his assistance, but her strength was unequal to the effort: her maid screamed for help, and several of the servants rushed into the room. We recovered the hapless Montauban; he looked round wildly for a moment, then fastening his eye on

Julia—

Julia—"I have murdered thee, he cried; that draught I gave thee—that draught was death!" He would have pressed her to his bosom; she sunk from his embrace—her closing eye looked piteous upon him—her hand was half stretched to his—and a single sigh breathed out her soul to Heaven!

"She shall not die," he cried, eagerly catching hold of her hand, and bending over her lifeless body with a glare of inconceivable horror in his aspect. I laid hold of his arm, endeavouring to draw his attention towards me; but he seemed not to regard me, and continued that frightful gaze on the remains of his much-injured wife. I made a sign for the servants to assist me, and taking his hand,

began to use a gentle sort of violence to lead him away. He started back a few paces, without, however, altering the direction of his eye, “ You may torture me (cried he, wildly), I can bear it all —Ha! Segarva there!—let them prove the hand-writing if they can—mark it, I say, there is no blood in her face—let me ask one question of the doctor—you know the effects of poison—her lips are white—bid Savillon kiss them now— they shall speak no more, Julia shall speak no more !”

Word was now brought me, that the physician, who had been sent for to the assistance of Julia, was arrived. He had come, alas! too late for her; but I meant to use his skill on

on behalf of Montauban. I repeated my endeavours, to get him away from the dreadful object before him; and at last, though he seemed not to heed the intreaties I made use of, he allowed himself to be conducted to his own apartment, where the doctor was in waiting. There were marks of confusion in this man's countenance, which I wished to dissipate. I made use of some expressive looks, to signify that he should appear more easy; and, assuming that manner myself, begged Montauban to allow him to feel his pulse.—“ You come to see my wife, (said he, turning towards him)—tread softly—she will do well enough when she wakes. There!—(stretching out his arm)—your hand trembles sadly; I will count the beatings myself—here is something

amiss; but I am not mad.—Your name is Arpentier, mine is Montauban—I am not mad.” The physician desired him to get undressed, and go to bed. “ I mean to do so, for I have not slept these two nights—but it is better not. Give me some potion against bad dreams—that’s well thought on, that’s well thought on.”

His servant had begun to undress him. He went for a few minutes into his closet; he returned with his night-gown on, and his look appeared more thoughtful and less wild than formerly. He made a slight bow to the physician: “ I shall see you when I rise, Sir.—Rouillé, is it not? (addressing himself to me, and squeezing my hand)—I am not fit for talking

talking just now, I know I am not.—
Good night!" I left him, whispering his
servant to stay in the room, unperceived,
if he could; but, at any rate, not to
leave his master alone.

I know not how I was so long able to
command reflection. The moment I left
Montauban, the horror of the scene I had
witnessed rushed upon my mind, and I
remember nothing of what passed, till I
found myself kneeling before the breath-
less remains of the ill-fated Julia. The
doctor was standing by me with a letter
in his hand: it was written by Montau-
ban, and had been found open on the
table of his study. Arpentier gave it
me, saying, it contained things which
should be communicated only to the
friends.

friends of the count. From it I discovered the dreadful certainty of what I had before gathered from the distracted words of Montauban. He had supposed his wife faithless, his bed dishonoured, and had revenged the imagined injury by poison.—My God! I can scarce, at this moment, believe that I have waked and seen this!

But his servant now came running into the room, calling for us to hasten into his master's chamber, for that he feared he was dead. We rushed into the room together—it was too true: Montauban was no more! The doctor tried, he confessed, without hope, several expedients to revive him; but they failed of success. I hung over the bed, entranced in the re-

collection of the fatal events I had seen. Arpentier, from the habit of looking on the forms of death, was more master of himself; after examining the body, and pondering a little on the behaviour of the count, he went into the closet, where he found, on a small table, a phial uncorked, which he brought to me. It explained the fate of Montauban; a label fastened to it, was inscribed **LAUDANUM**; its deadly contents he had swallowed in his delirium, before he went to bed.

Such was the conclusion of a life distinguished by the exercise of every manly virtue, and, except in this instance, unstained with a crime. While I mourn the fate of his most amiable wife, I recal

cal the memory of my once dearly-valued friend, and would shelter it with some apology if I could. Let that honour which he worshipped plead in his defence.—That honour we have worshipped together, and I would not weaken its sacred voice; but I look on the body of Montauban—I weep over the pale corse of Julia!—I shudder at the sacrifices of mistaken honour, and lift up my hands to pity and to justice.

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